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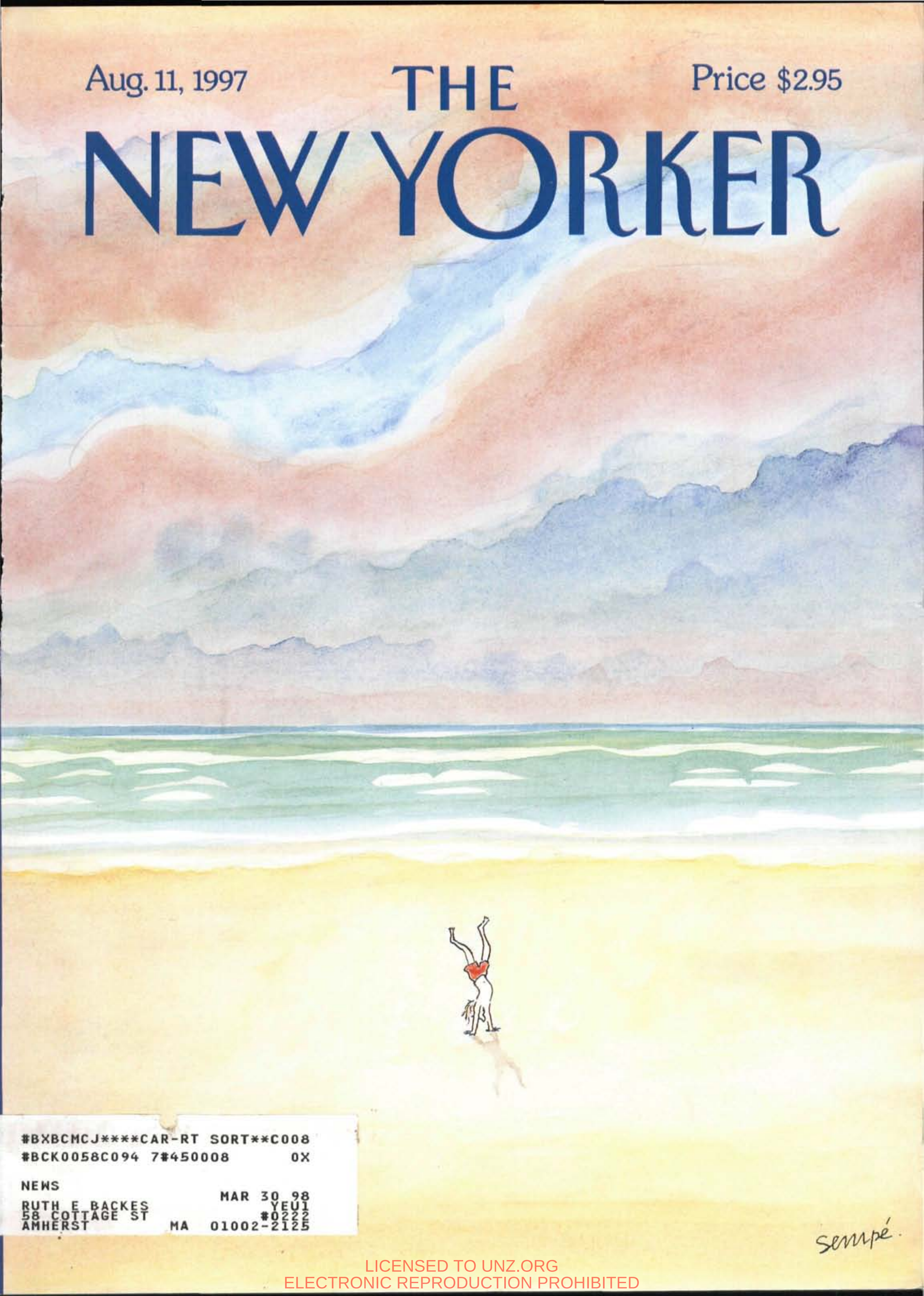

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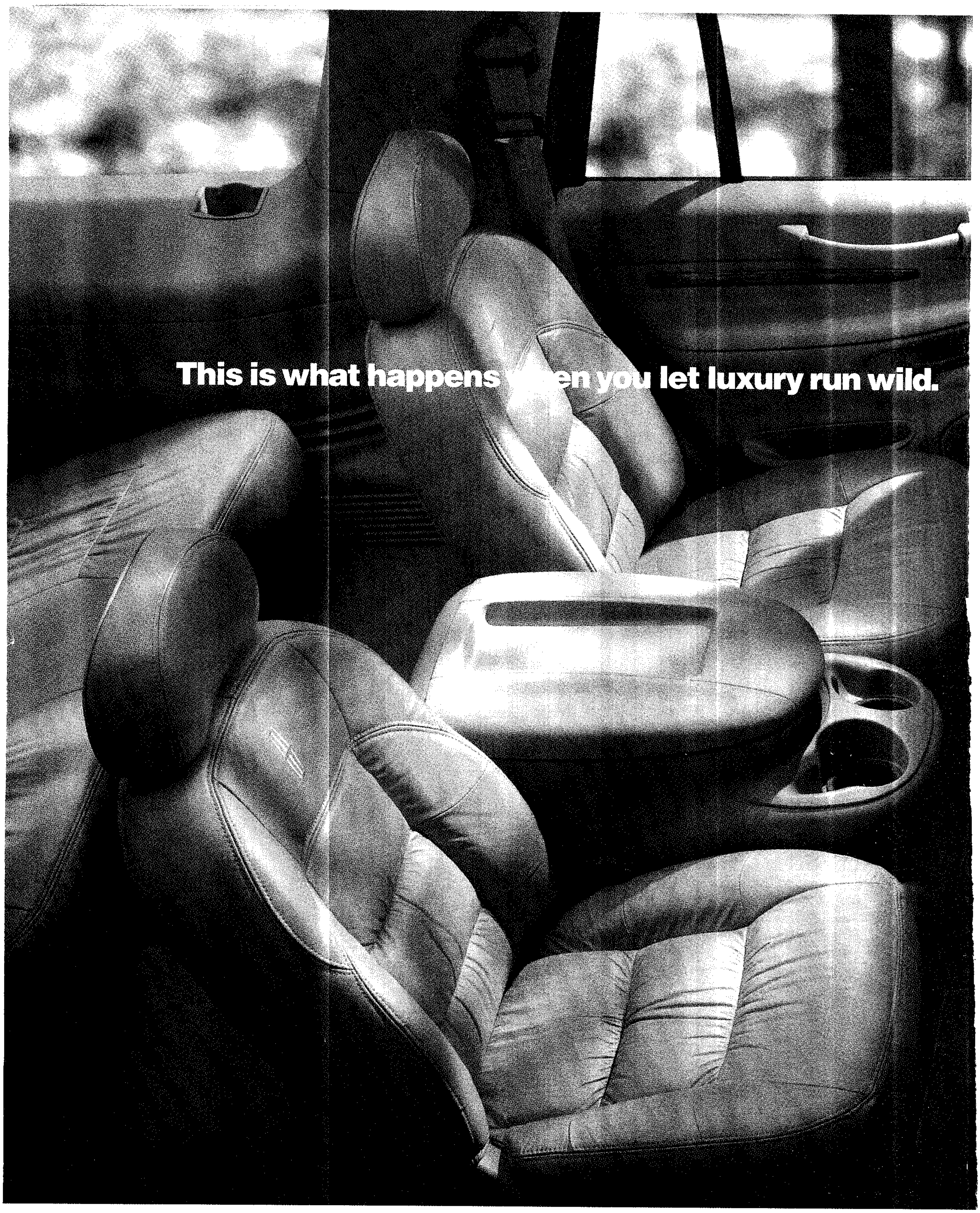
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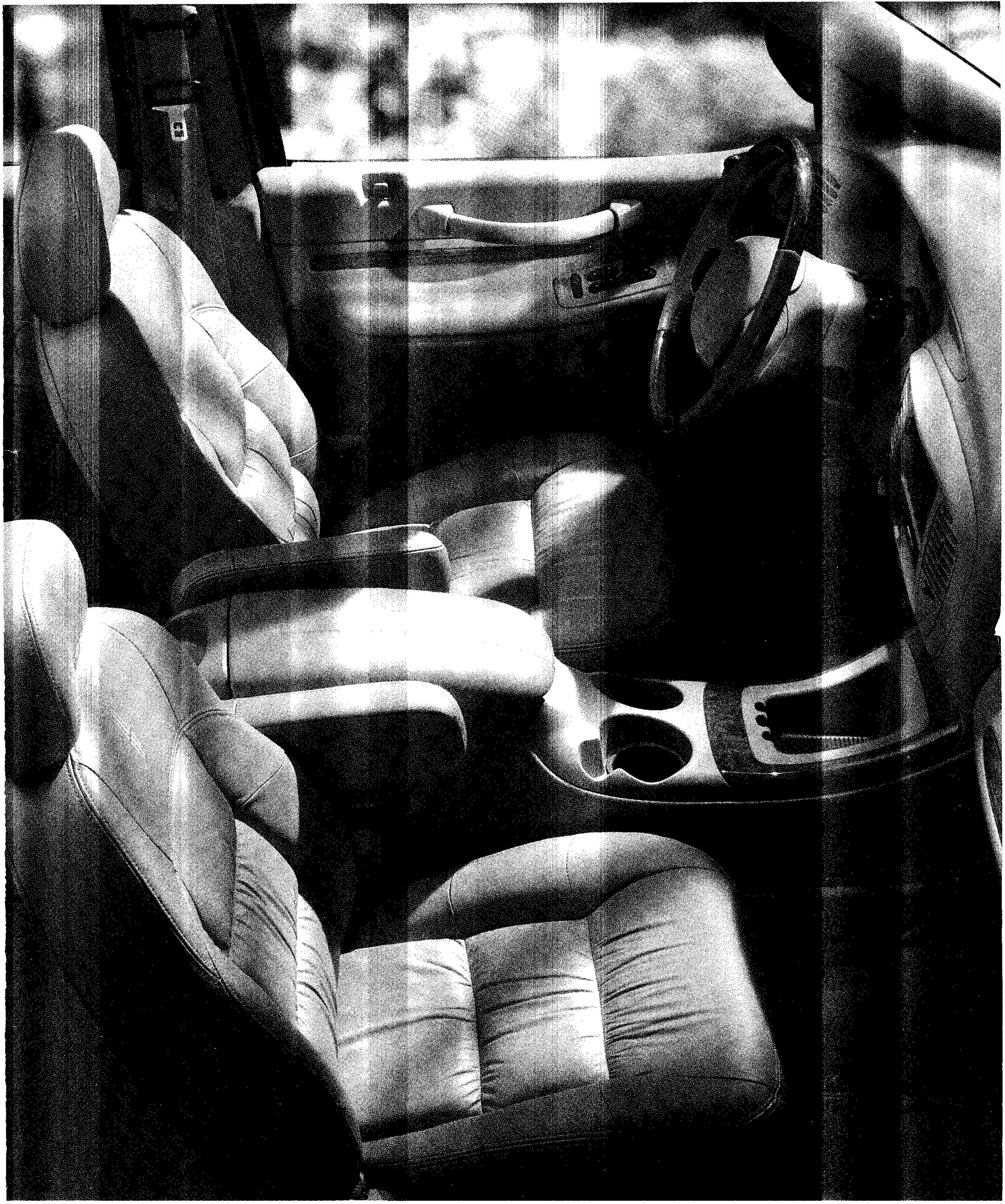

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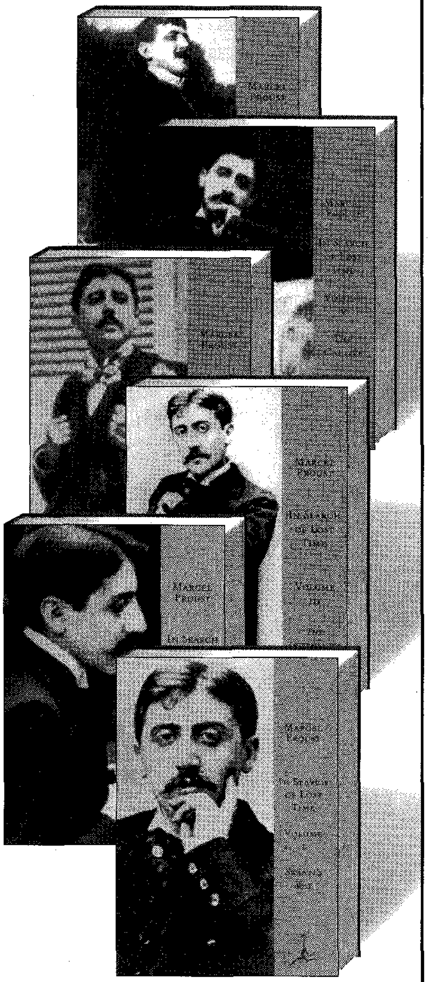

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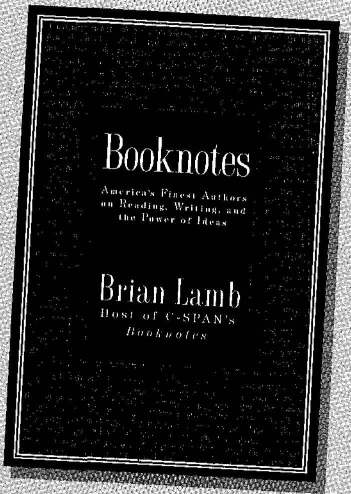
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COMMENT

THE BUDGET BOONDOGGLE

Why split the difference when you can just tally the totals?

THE political compromise, like jazz and Abstract Expressionism, is a peculiarly American art form. Other peoples may periodically resort to the barricades (the French), or to the Kalashnikov (the Balkan Slavs), or to the barracks (the Argentines) in order to settle their differences, or may not settle them at all (the Italians); Americans prefer to put an assortment of politicians in a room and keep them there until they've made a deal. In the nineteen-twenties, the usual result was memorably described by a master of the art—the cigar-chomping, derby-hat-wearing New York Governor Al Smith. On entering one such meeting, he is reputed to have said, "Somebody is going to get cheated. The only question is: Who?"

At first glance, last week's loudly trumpeted "balanced-budget agreement" between President Clinton and the Republican leaders of Congress seemed to violate Smith's dictum. "An historic agreement," boomed the President. "The beginning of a new era of freedom," hyperventilated Senator Trent Lott. "A dream come true," swooned Representative John Kasich. Where were the losers? For a while, even skeptics had a tough time spotting them. Here, after all, was a pact that appeared to balance the federal budget for the first time since 1969, while it simultaneously reduced taxes on the working poor (via a tax credit of five hundred dollars per child), on the nonworking rich (via a capital-gains-tax cut and the trimming of death duties), and on the hardworking middle class (via tax credits for college tuition), and boosted spending on children's health care, school construction, and the Pentagon. No wonder Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin, who was once a highly successful stock jobber, described it as a "win-win deal."

The Wall Street analogy bears inspection, however. As all traders know, the key to financial success often is not to sweat the details. Do the trade, pocket the gain, and let the person who bought from you worry about the future. (On Wall Street, this is known as the "greater fool" theory of investing.) Far from ushering in a historic new era, and so on, the budget agreement was simply a short-term trade in which the Democratic and Republican leaders took advantage of an unusually bullish economy to distribute a number of dubious handouts and make themselves look good. Among the people it cheated were the journalists who accepted the

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official story and the future taxpayers who will be left to deal with its aftermath.

Despite the headlines, this was *not* a balanced-budget agreement, if a balanced-budget agreement is defined as one that hastens the day when the federal government takes in as much money as it spends. Last week's agreement actually delays that day, by several years. The deficit for fiscal 1997 (which ends on September 30th) will be something like thirty or forty billion dollars, as against $107 billion last year and $290 billion in 1992. If the economy should keep on growing at its current pace (there are few signs of a slowdown) and policies should be left unchanged, the deficit would almost certainly wink out sometime between 1998 and 2000—well before 2002, the date envisaged in the understanding that dominated last week's front pages.

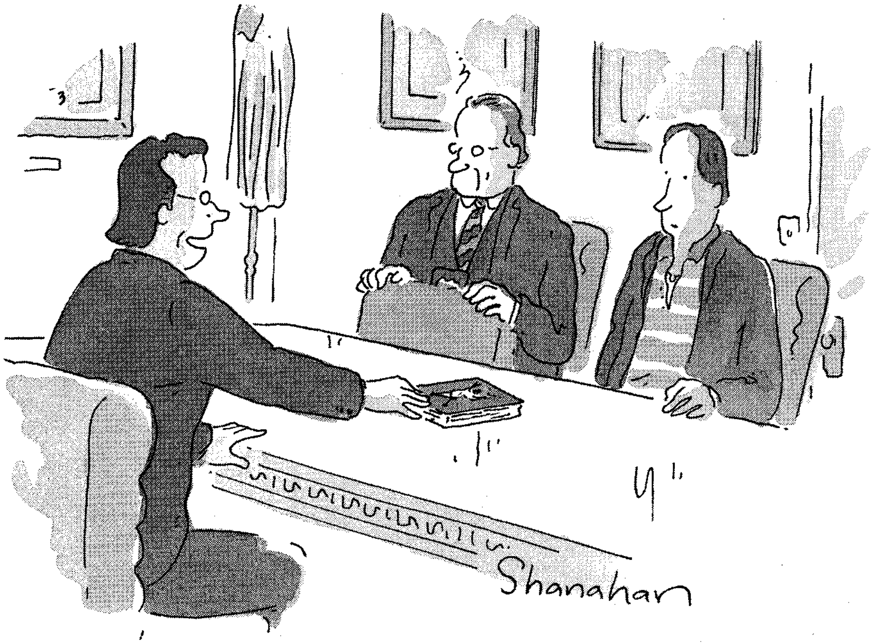
Rhetoric aside, the budget agreement is really about spending the extra tax dollars that have flowed into Washington as a result of unexpectedly strong economic growth. As recently as a year ago, the Congressional Budget Office was forecasting a deficit of about $170 billion for fiscal 1997, an estimate that is turning out to be about $130 billion too big. Earlier this year, the Democrats and the Republicans realized that they had several hundred billion dollars extra to play with over the next five years. They reacted like kids who have found their parents' stash of Halloween candy hidden in a closet. The question is who gets the goodies right now, and never mind that there may be a shortage when trick-or-treat time comes around. The Republicans requested a twenty-per-cent top rate for the capital-gains tax and ended up with eighteen per cent. The President asked for $16 billion to fund health care for poor children and got $24 billion. Savers, parents, homeowners, farmers, heirs, small-business owners, charitable trusts, and ethanol producers all got tax breaks of some kind. So complex and numerous were the giveaways that stock in H&R Block rose the day after the deal was announced. Investors had rightly figured that from now on a lot more people are going to need accountants to figure out their tax returns.

Nor was this a compromise, if a compromise is defined as a transaction in which two sides split the difference. This time the two sides just added their differences together and awarded themselves the total. Even so, only the terminally naïve will be surprised to learn that the really big gains go to the rich, while the benefits to middle-income families are modest at best. According to calculations carried out by the admirable Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a typical household in the middle twenty per cent of the income distribution will receive an annual tax reduction of about a hundred and fifty dollars, while a typical family in the richest one per cent will get a break of something like sixteen thousand dollars. And the ultra-rich among those one-per-centers will make out best of all. If Michael Eisner, for example, decides to take advantage of the new tax code by realizing twenty million dollars in capital gains on his Disney options (and he could help himself to a lot more than that if he felt like it), he will keep two million dollars more than he would have been able to do before.

It's hard to believe that this is what President Clinton had in mind when, in June of 1995, he followed Dick Morris's advice and expressed support for a balanced-budget agreement. Last week's deal was a gaudy handout to the rich disguised in the burlap of virtuous thrift. And what makes it all doubly ironic is that it was precisely the tax increases on wealthy people which were included in the 1990 and 1993 budget agreements that have made a balanced budget possible. Neither of those budgets was popular when it was introduced—the first probably cost President Bush the 1992 election, and the second almost certainly helped the Democrats lose control of Congress—but together they slashed the deficit and helped give rise to the present prolonged period of steady growth, low inflation, and soaring stock prices.

If last week's budget deal had set the country on a sustainable course, then its many shortcomings might be forgiven, but it hasn't done anything of the sort. After 2002, experts agree, the deficit will quickly reappear and then climb alarmingly unless policies are altered. (By 2015, according to the Congressional Budget Office, the deficit could total more than a trillion dollars.) The demographic trends behind this gloomy scenario are well known: as the baby boomers reach retirement, the number of working taxpayers will fall, while government spending on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid will increase sharply. But the budget accord barely addressed them; Social Security and Medicaid were hardly touched, while Medicare, the most pressing of the three problems, was temporarily patched up and passed on to a bipartisan national commission, which will not report its findings to the President until early 1999. At that point, even Al Smith, sent down from Heaven on special assignment, might have some difficulty finagling his way out of the budget jam.

—John Cassidy



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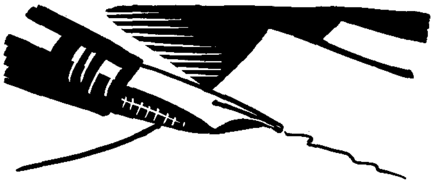

IMMIGRATION COMPUTATION

John Cassidy's "The Melting-Pot Myth" (July 14th) explores immigration only in terms of economics. If we used that paradigm to decide whether or not Americans should have children, who would shoulder the burden of having them? The immigration discussion should encompass individual contributions to American life: we see almost immediate benefits from new arrivals through their contributions in academe and in research; and our experience at the Catholic Charities immigrant center has shown that some of the most credible custodians of social values are immigrants and their families. Unquestionably, language and economic self-sufficiency must be addressed, but the richness of the immigrant experience has historically helped Americans use cultural differences in ways that strengthen our communities.

Rev. Monsignor Gregory A. Cox
Executive Director
Catholic Charities of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, Calif.

I'd add to "The Melting-Pot Myth" the observation that much of the relentless optimism about current immigration policy is based on the model of immigration to the United States in the decades around the turn of the century—a time when our society was not contending with automation or with capital and job export, factors that have diminished the ability of the otherwise thriving American economy to create well-paying jobs that encourage integration into a stable labor force.

Khachig Tölölyan
Editor, *Diaspora*
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Conn.

DISCUSSING DISGUST

Joseph Epstein adds to his otherwise keen look at William Ian Miller's "The Anatomy of Disgust" (Books, July 14th) a personal and ambiguously worded opinion: "Disgust is probably at the heart of the complex antipathies often felt between homosexuals and heterosexuals: each side is not so secretly appalled by what the other does with partners when the lights are out." I don't know one gay male, starting with myself, who is appalled by, rather than merely uninterested in, heterosexual intercourse. I don't know one straight male who admits to being disgusted by, rather than merely curious about, homosexual intercourse—unless this is between females, when he often drools. As for "complex antipathies," in our American age of legal freedoms mixed with puritan restraints, Epstein should speak only for himself. For it was he who wrote, in 1970, that he finds himself "completely incapable of coming to terms" with homosexuality.

Ned Rorem
Nantucket, Mass.

Mr. Epstein finds his own body—its fluids and organs—disgusting. Thus he defines himself as split from his body, from all the messy processes that bring life into being and sustain it. Such squeamishness is not only a denial of one's own life-support system but also a dangerous dualism, a Cartesian splitting of mind from body—a way of thinking that is leading us to ecological disaster.

Janet Kalven
Loveland, Ohio

MORE OR LESS

Auden described poetry as "memorable speech." The best of it is that and much more. Poets like Jorie Graham ("Big Poetry," by Stephen Schiff, July 14th) and John Ashbery seem to want to make it something different, and much less: shorthand epistemology, associative impressions recollected in anxiety, even surrealist therapy. I'll wager that no one, not even Graham's most energetic champion, can recite (without cheating) four consecutive lines of her verse. The language isn't as memorable as the name of the author—and that's why so much postmodern poetry has importance only for those who are shareholders in the industry.

Jeffrey L. Dye
Portland, Ore.

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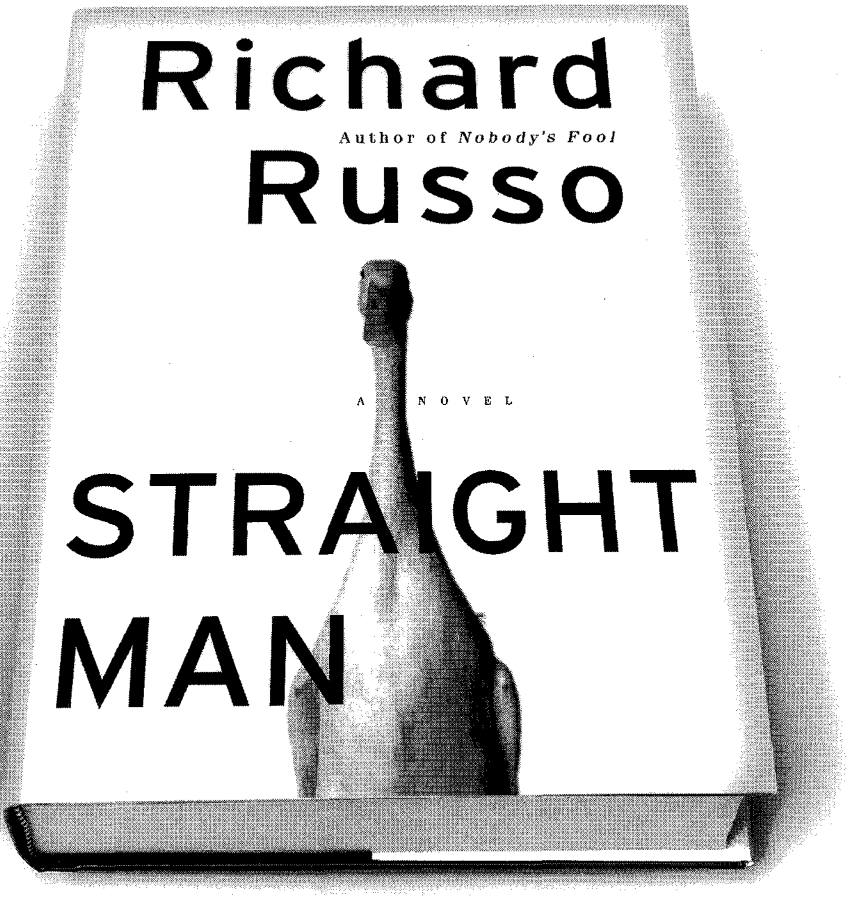

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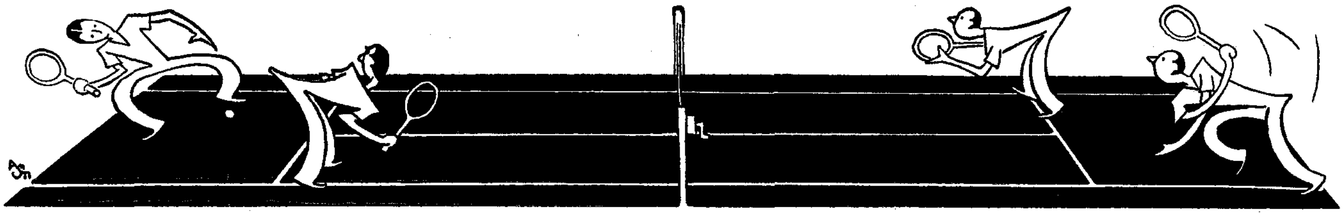

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Kings County Shakespeare Company—Repertory performances of "Macbeth," "The Comedy of Errors," and "The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)," a comedy by Jess Borgeson, Adam Long, and Daniel Singer, begin Aug. 12 at 8 and continue through Aug. 31. (Prospect Park Picnic House, 5th St. and Prospect Park W., Brooklyn. For information, call 718-826-4856.)

Misalliance—Shaw's 1910 comedy, in a Roundabout Theatre staging directed by David Warren. Two previews on Aug. 6. Opens Aug. 7 at 7:30. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

On the Town—As its second outdoor production of the summer, the New York Shakespeare Festival, having completed its Shakespeare marathon, offers this modern classic about three sailors on leave in New York. Based on the Jerome Robbins–Leonard Bernstein ballet "Fancy Free," with additional music by Bernstein and lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. Directed by George C. Wolfe and choreographed by Eliot Feld. In previews. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750.)

Rough Crossing—Tom Stoppard's 1984 comedy is the season opener for the Jean Cocteau Rep. Directed by Scott Shattuck. Preview on Aug. 8. Opens Aug. 9 at 8. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

1776—The 1969 musical by Sherman Edwards (music and lyrics) and Peter Stone (book). Directed by Scott Ellis. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Always . . . Patsy Cline—Not quite a revue, not quite a play, this spirited and Nashville-slick celebration of the late, great country singer is, rather, a streamlined song-delivery device: Tori Lynn Palazola, who plays Cline, sings twenty-one songs in a mere two hours. The show is based on Cline's relationship with a fan in Houston, played with large-hearted gusto by Margo Martindale. Palazola doesn't sound exactly like Patsy, but she's good at doing Patsy, and more than good when it comes to the slower numbers. The unsung, as it were, heroes of the production are the six members of the backup band, titans of twang all. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Annie—Can the powerhouse waif find another bonanza in this twentieth-anniversary revival of her Broadway musical? With eight-year-old Brittny Kissinger wearing the red fright wig, anything is possible: no one ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the New York public. Directed by Martin Charnin. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

As Bees in Honey Drown—In Douglas Carter Beane's comic indictment of America's obsession with fame, J. Smith-Cameron is hilarious as a cultural arbiter whose fabricated personality is, as an adoring Saks salesman (T. Scott Cunningham) puts it, "a mixture of every woman I've ever loved in a movie." The script, which has been given a vivid production by the Drama Dept., is a gleeful bon mot-filled éclair whose satirical power sours only when, every once in a while, it takes itself too seriously. Cunningham and Mark Nelson are both delightful in multiple supporting roles. With Bo Foxworth, as the young novelist who falls under Smith-Cameron's spell. Mark Brokaw directed. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

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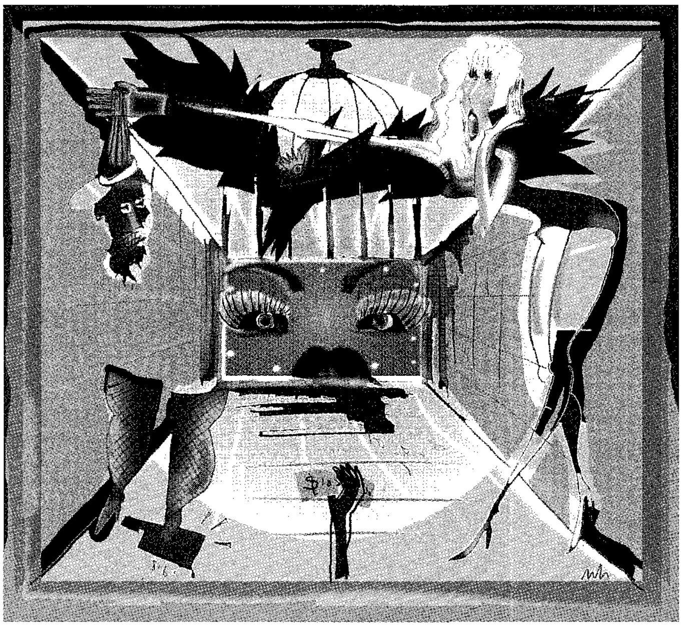
As You Like It—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival makes good use of its dramatic setting, on a bluff overlooking the river: the company plays the initial scenes entirely inside the tent where the audience sits, but when the action moves to the Forest of Arden the curtains are torn open to reveal the exiled Duke's courtiers frolicking literally outside the bounds of civilization. Unfortunately, that's the most imaginative moment in Nick Mangano's overthought, overwrought production. Still, the charmingly light and persuasive performances of Kirstin Allen and Rob A. Wilson, as Rosalind and Orlando, tip the balance in favor of fun. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 914-265-9575. Closes Aug. 17.)

Barrymore—Christopher Plummer's rich, unmiked voice hits every note of sarcasm and self-loathing in William Luce's rambunctious script as he perfectly captures the grief behind the old ham's gallant frivolity. Well directed by Gene Saks. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)



Theatre Couture's "Tell-Tale."

MARK HARFIELD

Bermuda Avenue Triangle—In this silly farce, a sexy gambler on the skids (Joseph Bologna) returns the zing to the lives of two elderly women, a Jew (Renée Taylor) and a Catholic (Nanette Fabray), whose sullen daughters have put them out to pasture in a Las Vegas retirement home. Bologna and Taylor's script traffics in the kind of cookie-cutter stereotypes that rate high on the matinée-crowd yuk-o-meter. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Chicago City Limits—The improv company presents its latest revue, "@Chicago City Limits.comedy." (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

Cigarettes and Chocolate—American Opera Projects presents Anthony Minghella's tragicomedy with music, adapted from his 1988 radio play, about a woman who stops talking. Directed by Gabriele Jakobi. (Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St., at E. Houston St. 431-8102. Closes Aug. 9.)

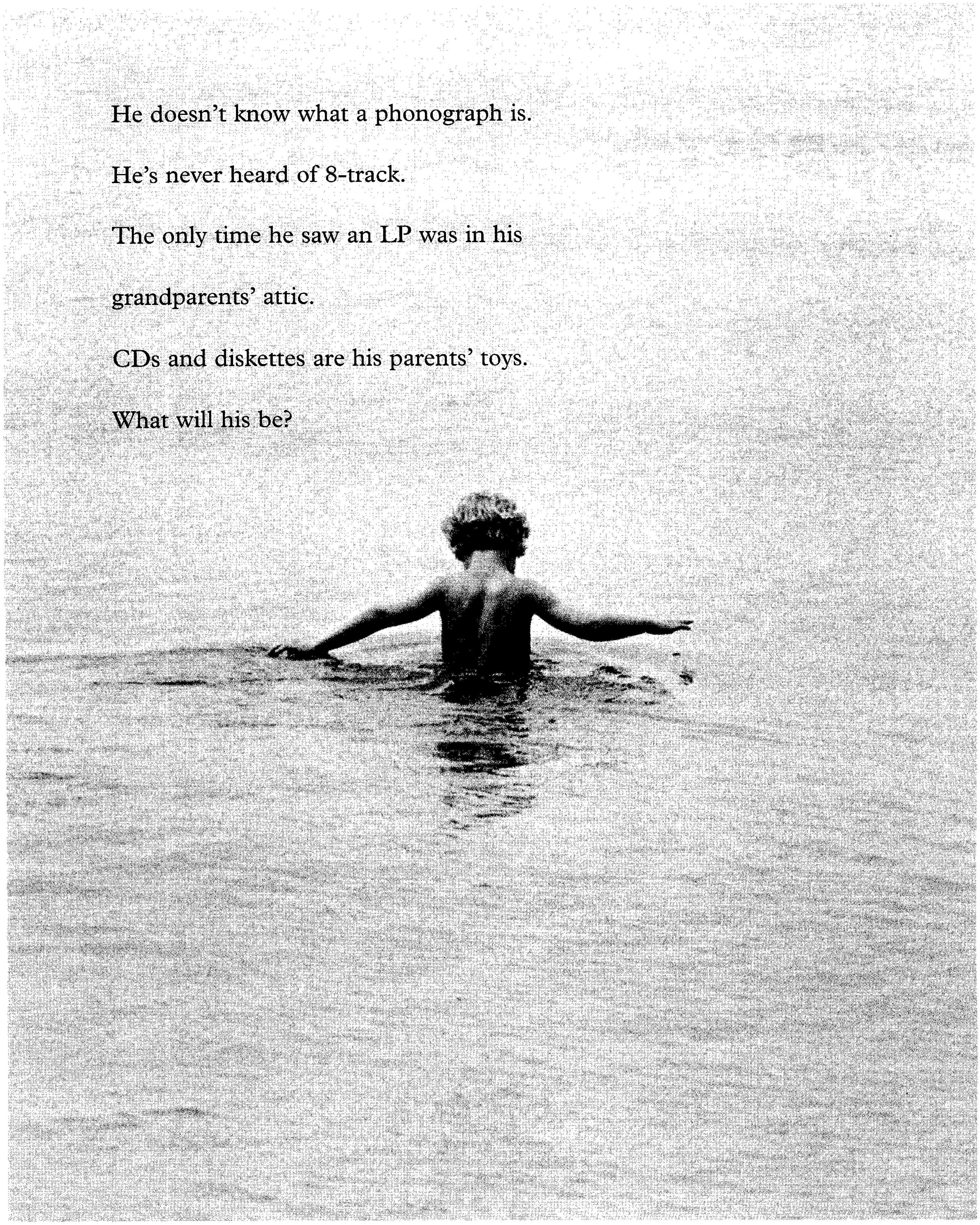
A Doll's House—A thrilling version of Ibsen's play, imported from the West End. Anthony Page's scrupulous, sensitive direction catches all the music and irony in the collusion between Nora (in a masterly turn by Janet McTeer) and her husband, Torvald (the passionate Owen Teale). (Reviewed in our issue of 4/14/97.) (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 31.)

Forever Tango—This stepchild of Vegas and Buenos Aires gets everything right, from the basic ingredients (sex, pomade) to the big emotions (e.g., the weltschmerz of the bandonion players). One after another, the acrobatic couples flaunt their scissor steps with lubricious joy. But the real treat is the character dancing: it's a big surprise to encounter so many styles—suave, measured, sleazy, torrid, muscular, slapstick—and such a variety of song-length minidramas. Created and directed by Luis Bravo. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Gin Game—Julie Harris and Charles Durning shine in the National Actors Theatre's funny, poignant revival of D. L. Coburn's 1977 play, about two elderly people who discover an antidote to their loneliness in a card game. Charles Nelson Reilly directed. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde—Writer-director Moisés Kaufman renders the playwright's trials from edited transcripts, interposing passages from letters, Wilde's writings, and other people's memoirs and commentaries. The result, thanks to Kaufman's clever (if occasionally self-indulgent) direction and a strong, versatile cast—especially Michael Emerson, in the title role—is powerful and surprisingly theatrical. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Hell's Cuisinart—A comedy about New York life, set in five Hell's



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Kitchen studio apartments. Written by David Caudle. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 332-0894.)

How I Learned to Drive—Paula Vogel's memory play, about a young woman (Jayne Atkinson) who comes of age too quickly under the tutelage of her pedophile uncle (Joel Colodner), is a clear-eyed marvel. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Ice Factory 97—The fifth offering in the SoHo Think Tank's summer series is "Sept," a piece after Maurice Maeterlinck, adapted by Claudia Botta and featuring the Milanese troupe Les Drammes Statiques. Aug. 8-10 at 7. The festival continues through Aug. 24. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 966-4844.)

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Jekyll & Hyde—Enjoyable bombast, loosely based on the Robert Louis Stevenson novel. With music by Frank Wildhorn, lyrics and a book by Leslie Bricusse, and solid direction by Robin Phillips. (5/12/97) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Last Night of Ballyhoo—In this romantic comedy of manners, set in Atlanta in 1939, Alfred Uhry stays true to a Southern sense of propriety: he takes on an unsavory topic (anti-Semitism among the Jewish upper crust) without dwelling on it long enough to offend anyone, and, like a practiced host, he shows you a good time without taxing you. Ron Lagomarsino directed. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

The Last Session—A musical about an AIDS-afflicted songwriter's final studio work, with a book by Jim Brochu and music and lyrics by Steve Schalchlin. (Currican, 154 W. 29th St. 736-2533. Closes Aug. 31.)

The Life—This new musical, about the oldest profession in Times Square (before it became known as the new Times Square) and the men who profit from its practitioners, is a cynical, poisonous concoction, featuring phony funk, fake blues, overcooked pop, and a cartoonish, insulting book. The cast includes some good singers, notably Lillias White and Pamela Isaacs. (5/12/97) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

A Lullaby for Murder—A thriller set in Hell's Kitchen, written by Le Wilhelm and presented by Love Creek Productions. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 769-7973. Closes Aug. 30.)

Mass Appeal—A revival by the Irish Repertory Theatre of Bill C. Davis's 1980 play, about a popular if not particularly religious priest (Tony Coleman) who must cope with a seminarian (Paul McGrane) whose intellectual passion overwhelms his humanity. The story of what each man teaches the other is a familiar one, but it's told well and with humor. And, because it's about priests, the play also explores vexed questions about faith and compassion and power, intelligently enough to give the evening some real depth. The two actors give strong performances under the deft direction of Charlotte Moore. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Measure for Measure—The Worth Street Theatre has set its staging of Shakespeare's comedy in America during the sexual revolution of the nineteen-sixties. (Greenwich Street Theatre, 547 Greenwich St. 279-4200. Closes Aug. 17.)

Mere Mortals and Others—David Ives, who created the wonderful "All in the Timing," has lately changed his tune to "All in the Recycling": only two of the six short plays here are new. They are, however, Ives at his clever best. "Time Flies" is about the short life of two mayflies—only one day to grow up and get it on before going to the great beyond—and the two actors who play them, Anne O'Sullivan and Arnie Burton, are perfectly buggy. "Dr. Fritz; or, The Forces of Light" is a piece of insanity set somewhere south of the border, and Nancy Opel, woman of a hundred lunatic accents (she was simply terrific in "All in the Timing"), gives an inspired performance as a *loca* local and as a mad German doctor. The show closes here Aug. 9 and reopens at the John Houseman on Aug. 13. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream and **The Taming of the Shrew**—Gorilla Rep's free outdoor stagings of Shakespeare's plays run in repertory—"Dream" on Thursdays and Saturdays, "Shrew" on Fridays and Sundays—through Sept. 21, in the southwest corner of Washington Square Park. (For more information, call 807-4999.)

Notions in Motion—Jeremy Dobrish's very loose adaptation of Pirandello's "Each in His Own Way" consists of some very funny sketches stitched together by long stretches of overblown blather, nearly redeemed by a surprise ending that subverts the entire notion of theatre and theatrical truth. The cast of this Adobe Theatre Company production, directed by Mr. Dobrish, is for the most part terrific. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 560-7387. Closes Aug. 9.)

Portrait of the Artist as Filipino—Nick Joaquin's 1952 drama about a painter and his two middle-aged daughters, set in Manila before the Second World War. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Aug. 16.)

Sugar Down Billie Hoak—Brian Silberman's drama about two homeless teens, set in the New York subway at night, comes with a strong-language/graphic-sex warning. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Tap Dogs—Australia's work-booted tap troupe. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 24.)

Tell-Tale—Theatre Couture puts a drag spin on Edgar Allan Poe, in a comic thriller starring Sherry Vine and Jackie Beat. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Aug. 30.)

Titanic—Though this musical about history's most tragic maiden voyage contains no small number of historical and theatrical misjudgments, it nevertheless manages to take you very close to the heart of the matter, and it qualifies as a genuine addition to American musical theatre. Richard Jones directed. (5/12/97) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **FULL GALLOP:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. (Closes Aug. 30.) . . . **A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE KING AND I:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo—One of the first troupes to address the shortage of choice male roles in ballet presents its solution: testosterone in toe shoes. As the company has matured, its all-male versions of such ballet classics as "Swan Lake" Act II, "Paquita," and "Esmeralda" have grown nearly serious. With Margeaux Mundeyn, Vanya Verikosa, Adam Baum, et al. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Aug. 4-8 at 8 and Aug. 9 at 2 and 8.)

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—Free alfresco dance. Aug. 7-8 at 8:15: Paul Taylor Dance Company. (Damrosch Park.) . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 5:30: Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group. (Fountain Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 5:30: Works by choreographers Andrea E. Woods, Tiffany Mills, Ursula Payne, and Christine Bodwitch. (Fountain Plaza.)

Central Park SummerStage—A split bill: Trisha Brown Company appears in the group work "Twelve Ton Rose"; the choreographer then performs the solo "Accumulation." Wally Cardona and his troupe follow with "Blood Variations," "No Boom, No Bang," and "Made in Voyage." (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. Aug. 8 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Noche Flamenca—Soledad Barrio joins Bruno Argenta (replacing Barrio's injured husband, Martin Santangelo) to anchor this eight-member troupe of dancers, singers, and guitarists as it brings the passionate vocabulary of flamenco (the proud carriage, flashing hands, declarative boot work, intensely focussed gazes) to the intimate Theatre 80. (80 St. Marks Pl. 279-4200. Aug. 6-9 and Aug. 12 at 8, and Aug. 10 at 3. Through Aug. 17.)

Pilar Rioja—The *reina* of Spanish dance celebrates a quarter century of New York seasons with a range of work, from "La Monja Gitana," based on a García Lorca poem about a nun reminded of her gypsy childhood, to her latest piece (in a more secular vein), "Orgia." (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Aug. 6-7, Aug. 10, and Aug. 12 at 7; Aug. 8 at 8; and Aug. 9 at 3. Through Sept. 7.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Aug. 5-7 at 8, Aug. 8 at 8:30, and Aug. 9 at 2 and 8:30: Dance Theatre of Harlem. . . . ¶ Aug. 7-8 at 8:15, Aug. 9 at 5, and Aug. 10 at 7: Muntu Dance Theatre and Curubande. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

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SONY

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"Jamizon '97"—Or Urbanpalooza, featuring Keith Sweat, SWV, Kenny Lattimore, Brownstone, and Mark Morrison. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Aug. 6 at 7.)

Live / Luscious Jackson—America's most earnest arena act. "Secret Samadhi," the band's follow-up to its 1994 multiplatinum "Throwing Copper," is a collection of rural-Pennsylvania platitudes and odes to emotional constipation. / Expectations weren't quite so high for Luscious Jackson's fourth record, but the lackluster response to "Fever In Fever Out," yet another simmering batch of funk, was a real shame. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Aug. 6-7 at 7:30.)

Aerosmith—Their back catalogue sounds better every year. (Any post-grunge outfit worth its salt has a copy of "Toys in the Attic" on the tour bus.) Swivel-hipped, balloon-lipped Steven Tyler and the boys will probably swagger on forever. With sixteen-year-old blues-guitar prodigy (and MTV hero) Jonny Lang. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Aug. 6 at 8.)

Garth Brooks—Like the infinitely more attractive Shania Twain, this protean cowpoke hit the big time when he mixed Nashville cheese (ten-gallon hat, she-loves-me-she-loves-my-horse lyrics) with VH1 attitude (stretch pants, slick pop production). He's bad, he's nationwide, and you can bet this free concert will make the crowds that showed up for "Pocahontas" seem like a bunch of hoodlums. (North Meadow, Central Park. Aug. 7 at 8.)

Burt Bacharach and Dionne Warwick—The team that brought you "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," "Walk On By," "Alfie," and oh so many more. (Westbury Music Fair. 516-334-0800. Aug. 7 at 8.)

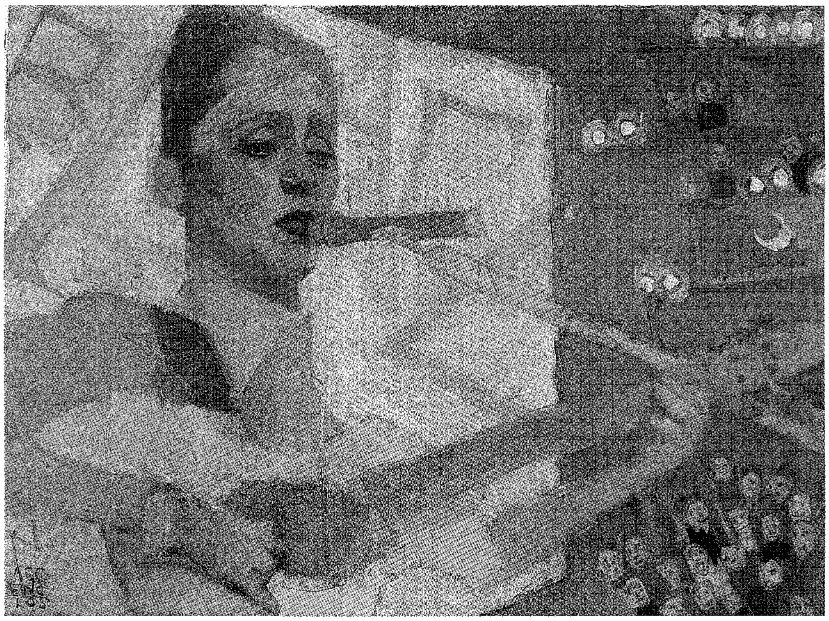
The Barry Harris Trio—The veteran pianist Harris is a devotee of Bud Powell, so you'd expect him to spin out feverish, high-velocity lines. Instead, he's a bebop proselytizer who takes his time, lolling in the poetry of the music rather than flaunting its athleticism. Part of the Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Festival. (North Plaza. Aug. 8 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

Barry Manilow—Having made it through the rain, he's just about ready to take a chance again. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 8 at 8.)

Maxi Priest / Third World / Original Wailers Band—Rastafarian heaven. (Westbury Music Fair. Aug. 8 at 8.)

Allen Toussaint / New Birth Brass Band—Toussaint has been a major force on the New Orleans music scene, writing great songs for great performers, for four decades; Etta James, Dr. John, Irma Thomas, and the Neville Brothers have all recorded his work. He's also a marvellously understated singer and an excellent pianist with a driving, rhythmic style. / The young blood out of the Crescent City works up a hot mix of hip-hop, funk grooves, Indian chants, and free jazz. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. Aug. 9 at 3.)

Isaac Hayes / Ashford & Simpson—A former house producer and writer for Stax, "Black Moses" was responsible for such Sam & Dave hits as "Soul Man" and "When Something Is Wrong with My Baby." He later put out a series of gritty funk albums culminating, of course, in the mega-platinum, Academy Award-winning "Shaft." Bad films and uneven records followed, but Hayes made a stunning comeback in 1995 with two fine disks: "Branded" and the instrumental "Movement—Raw and Refined."/Back in the late sixties, the Rodgers and Hart of Motown penned and produced such classics as "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" and "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing" before leaving Gordyville for a plush contract with Warner Bros. Although their subsequent recorded work has been spotty (their last major hit was "Solid," in 1985), their live appearances are still thrilling. (Westbury Music Fair. Aug. 9 at 8.)



Joan Baez, at the Bottom Line.

N. ASCENCIOS

Geri Allen and Wallace Roney—The Mr. and Mrs. spend the afternoon playing around together, and you're invited to join them. Allen may be the most accomplished pianist of her talented generation: she's a multifaceted stylist who's as comfortable whittling a tune into slivers of stabbing rhythms and quizzical chords as she is burnishing a golden melody. Trumpeter Roney, on the other hand, seems positively terrified of tunefulness: his lines arpeggiate up, his lines arpeggiate down—the effect is like being seasick on dry land. Love conquers all, though, and there's a good chance that her smarts are rubbing off on him. (Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway. Aug. 10 at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

David Rudder and Charlie's Roots / Krosfyah—A Caribbean carnival in the Park, with the Trinidadian singer and his calypso-and-soca backup band and the Barbadian soca group. (Central Park SummerStage. Aug. 10 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Daryl Hall and John Oates—It's hard to believe that this Mutt-and-Jeff duo once ruled the pop charts. It's equally astounding that they have fallen off the face of the earth. In any case, Hall's Philadelphia-trained croon helped invent blue-eyed soul, and the pair's vast catalogue of hits is probably seared into your mental hard drive. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 10 at 8.)

Diane Schuur / Buddy Collette—The remarkably versatile singer-pianist, who is equally at home with forties standards, R. & B. wails, and sultry torch songs, and the West Coast flutist and clarinettist. Part of the Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors Festival. (Damrosch Park. Aug. 10 at 8:15. No tickets necessary.)

H.O.R.D.E. Festival—Once upon time, H.O.R.D.E. was the festival hipsters condescended to. It lacked the indie credentials of Lollapalooza, and it gave off the collective fragrance of a million well-worn Birkenstocks. The hippie aroma remains, but the hipsters have come aboard. This year's model features Beck (the king of cool), Soul Coughing (full-metal funk), Ben Folds Five (piano-driven pop), Primus, Morphine, Toad the Wet Sprocket, Kula Shaker, the Squirrel Nut Zippers, Big Head Todd and the Monsters, and an up-and-coming combo called Neil Young and Crazy Horse. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 12 at 6; doors open at 5.)

Wayne Newton—Some say the King of Vegas has lost his voice, but to the loyalists who love him for his patriotic showmanship, that's not necessarily an issue. The former child star wowed them in Vietnam, Lebanon, and the Persian Gulf (the Department of Defense honored him as the only American to entertain troops in all three spots); he wows them in Vegas; and he wows them in Branson, Missouri, where he performs twenty weeks a year at the fourteen-million-dollar Wayne Newton Theatre. Miss hearing him sing "Danke Schoen" at the peril of your family values. (Westbury Music Fair. Aug. 12 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist Vanessa Rubin is at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room through Aug. 9. Dining.

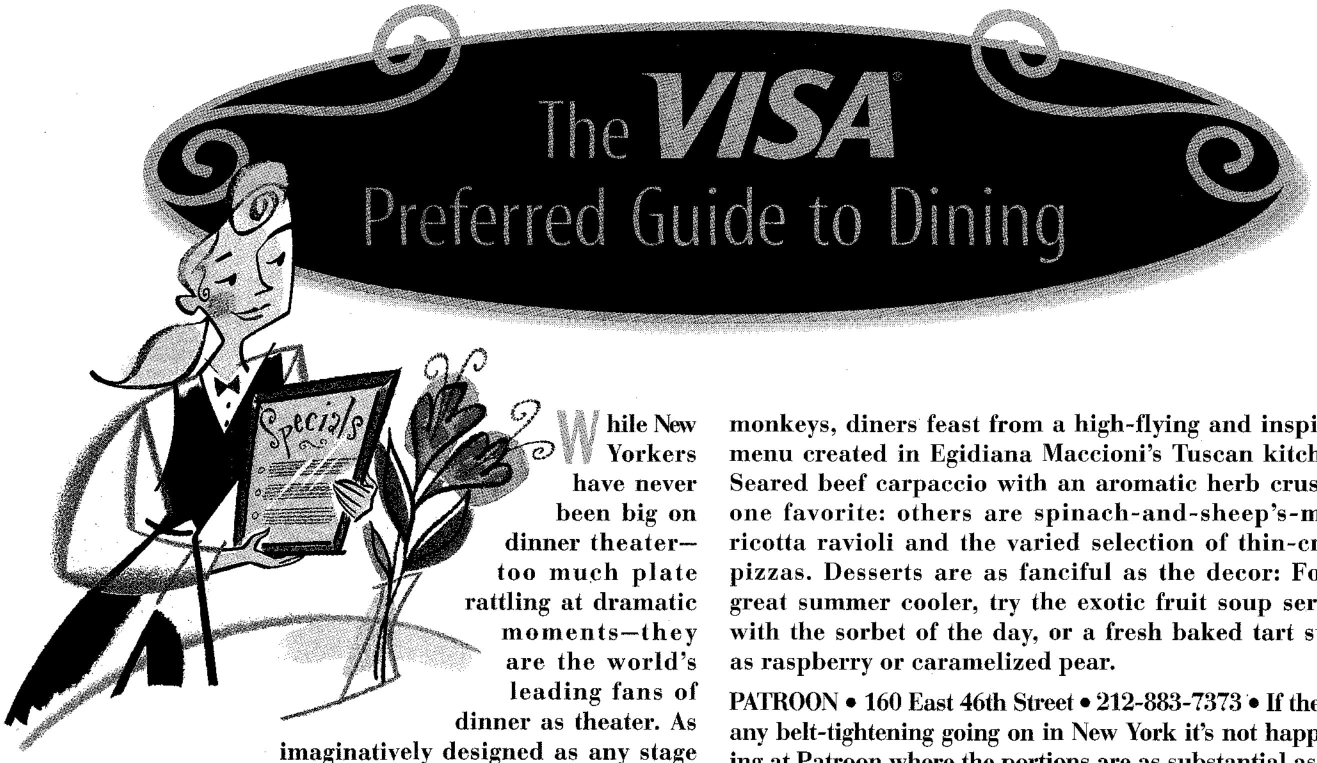
Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Jazz-fusion guitarist **JULIAN CORYELL** (yes, he's the son of Larry) is in on Aug. 7. **"JACKIE'S BLUE BAG,"** a tribute session to Jackie McLean, takes place Aug. 8-9. When all the dust settles, McLean, the earthy altoist who has made peace with both bop and free jazz, will surely emerge as the most influential saxophonist since John Coltrane. A slew of eager McLean acolytes, including **CRAIG HANDY, VINCENT HERRING, MYRON WALDEN,** and **JUSTIN ROBINSON,** will all do him proud. Pianist **CEDAR WALTON,** who whoops it up for three nights beginning Aug. 12, is a New York institution—a neo-bop stylist so firmly in control that his graceful and dashing runs seem like second nature. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—The Argentine tenor saxophonist **GATO BARBIERI** (through Aug. 10) has a sensuous tone and a résumé that includes everything from avant-garde work in the sixties to composing the score for "Last Tango in Paris." Starting Aug. 12: The **RAY BROWN** trio with **STANLEY TURRENTINE.** Dining.

Citron 47, at 401 W. 47th St. (397-4747)—A comfy living-room bistro in Hell's Kitchen. The **CHUCK WILSON** trio is out to show that Monday nights aren't just for big bands. Swing saxophonist Wilson's chamber-jazz threesome includes guitarist **HOWARD ALDEN,** a master of pre-bop idioms, and bassist **MURRAY WALL.** Dining.

Druids, 736 10th Ave., at 50th St. (307-6410)—Dark and neighborhoody atmosphere; bar-and-grill fare. A break from big bands at the start of the workweek is welcome, and **WEBBER'S WAILER**—bassist John Webber, organ-

TASTE OF NEW YORK



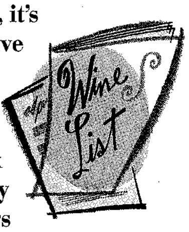
The VISA Preferred Guide to Dining

While New Yorkers have never been big on dinner theater—too much plate rattling at dramatic moments—they are the world's leading fans of dinner as theater. As imaginatively designed as any stage set, Gotham's best restaurants welcome us into worlds of elegance, whimsy, and delight. Yet the real stars toil offstage—inspired chefs performing nightly acts of magic in kitchens all over the city. Bravos are in order—to them and to you: Thanks to Visa and this restaurant program exclusive to *The New Yorker*, every time you charge a meal using your Visa® card at the restaurants participating in this and other "Taste of New York" features, you'll also contribute to Citymeals-on-Wheels, a nonprofit organization that delivers hot meals to the homebound elderly.*

ARQUA • 281 Church Street • 212-334-1888 • Spacious and airy, with high ceilings, a brassbound bar, and a few large, round tables, Arqua is a fine place to bring a convivial group. An appetizer and a pasta dish may be just the combination to sate summer appetites. From the antipasti table, order fresh marinated artichokes, delicately prepared to allow the flavor and perfume to come through. Another surefire crowd pleaser: lightly sautéed baby calamari. Then, if you can't choose between the risotto, gnocchi with tomato sauce and fresh herbs, or artichoke lasagna (all delicious) for your pasta course, have the kitchen prepare a tasting plate of all three.

OSTERIA DEL CIRCO • 120 West 55th Street • 212-265-3636 If you're suddenly seized by a desire to run away and join the circus, there couldn't be a more delicious destination than this culinary big top. Under the watchful eyes of mechanical monkeys, diners feast from a high-flying and inspired menu created in Egidiana Maccioni's Tuscan kitchen. Seared beef carpaccio with an aromatic herb crust is one favorite: others are spinach-and-sheep's-milk ricotta ravioli and the varied selection of thin-crust pizzas. Desserts are as fanciful as the decor: For a great summer cooler, try the exotic fruit soup served with the sorbet of the day, or a fresh baked tart such as raspberry or caramelized pear.

PATROON • 160 East 46th Street • 212-883-7373 • If there's any belt-tightening going on in New York it's not happening at Patroon where the portions are as substantial as the business deals transacted here. While this handsome restaurant shows power femmes their due respect, it's an unabashedly masculine environment. Executive chef Franck Deletrain dishes out a classic, hearty, New York menu strong on Caesar salad, fresh seafood, sirloin steak, and spit-roasted chicken that conceals a treasure of black truffles beneath its skin. Upstairs, the clubby cigar lounge is decorated with leather armchairs and vintage photos that recall great sporting moments in New York City history.



THE TERRACE • 400 West 119th Street • 212-666-9490 Perched atop Columbia University's Butler Hall, The Terrace offers high-level cuisine and equally lofty views of Manhattan. Even picky eaters will delight in chef Kenny Johnson's five-course tasting menu. If there are certain ingredients you wish to avoid, tell him and he'll deliver inspired creations that please your particular palate. Beautifully presented lobster and chanterelle "potstickers" with truffled mushroom salad, Moroccan-spiced jumbo prawns, and charcoal-grilled octopus and calamari salad are all uncommonly good. Even if you can't eat another bite afterwards, you're likely to finish every morsel of dessert—especially if it's chocolate Black Forest bread pudding with toasted-almond cherry gelato. •

by Susan Breslow Sardone

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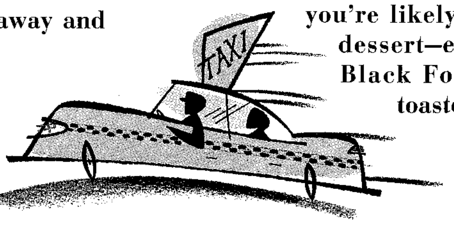

Illustrations by Steven Salerno

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ist Mike LeDonne, drummer Joe Farnsworth, and either Eric Alexander or Doug Lawrence, who alternate on tenor sax—is another ensemble intent on making Monday nights once again safe for small groups.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—**THE FIRM** (through Aug. 10) brings New York—in the persons of bassist Reggie Workman, guitarist Mark Whitfield, and drummer Ronnie Burrage—together with Los Angeles, represented by the beefy, lyrical saxophonist Ernie Watts. If the band makes a go of it, Watts may just have to consider bicoastality. Starting Aug. 12: The **ROY HAYNES** quartet. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.** Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass figurine lamps. Pianist **LEE MUSIKER** and bassist **JAY LEONHART** are in Aug. 6-9.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Keyboardist **ANTHONY COLEMAN** (Aug. 10) has been pursuing variety (from historically oriented studies of Ellington to the deconstructionist shenanigans of John Zorn) for so long now that surprise is the only surefire element in his performances. It takes both talent and skill to pull off eclecticism this far-reaching. Aug. 12: **DAVE DOUGLAS' SANCTUARY.** Douglas is the downtown trumpeter of choice. He's got a wide imagination, but his real gift is old-fashioned polish. His conservative bent makes for a sparkling sound and gives him solid compositional resources.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—**TONY CORBISCELLO'S BIG BAND** pays tribute to Frank Sinatra on Aug. 8-9.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. The **SIR ROLAND HANNA** quartet holds forth through Aug. 10. One of the giants of Detroit's fertile pianistic delta, Hanna is an Ellington scholar, a crackerjack blues player, and a knight of the Liberian government. An open-armed stylist who can be as fastidious as he is funky, he remains delightfully beyond categorization. From Aug. 12: The **STEVE TURRE** sextet. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **CECIL TAYLOR** trio has the stage through Aug. 10. Popular taste usually catches up with jazz innovators; the cases of Thelonious Monk and Ornette Coleman spring to mind. But Taylor still sounds as visionary and disruptive, as poetic and discursive, as he must have back in 1957, when he first startled a staid jazz scene with his outright rejection of standard rhythms and formalized improvisatory ploys, not to mention his liberal—and terrifying—use of tonal clusters and other outré devices adapted from modern classical music. The sheer gusto of Taylor's astounding technique mesmerizes. It's best to let yourself be engulfed by his musical torrents—you'll come out battered but enlightened. From Aug. 12: The **GERI ALLEN** trio. (See also Concerts.) The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. Pianist **JAMES WILLIAMS** and bassist **PETER WASHINGTON** set the tone through Aug. 9.

ROCK, ETC.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—"House on Fire" (Aug. 7) is an evening of topflight urban folk with, among others, **SUZZY ROCHE, GUY DAVIS, CLIFF EBERHARDT,** and **LUCY KAPLANSKY.** The **JAZZ PASSENGERS** cruise in on Aug. 8. While sixties diva **JOAN BAEZ** (Aug. 12) continues to (in the words of the old protest song) "Carry It On" with humanitarian organizations like Amnesty International, she's become more a symbol than an actual musical presence. Her comeback album from a few years ago, "Ring Them Bells," recorded live at this club with a little help from Janis Ian, Mary Chapin Carpenter, and the Indigo Girls, didn't make much of a dent, but her clarion soprano still brings anyone within earshot to attention. Baez is joined here by singer-songwriters Richard Shindell, Betty Elders, and Sinéad Lohan.

TABLES FOR TWO

Le Jardin Bistro, 25 Cleveland Pl., at Spring St. (343-9599)—Peer between the grapevines of Le Jardin's *jardin,* and you spot frogs: here a plaster bullfrog sitting on a wall; there a gaudy inflatable toad up a tent pole; there, beneath a Balthazar of Moët, an amphibian on an ashtray. They're jokes planted by the owner and chef, Gérard Maurice, as throwaway as his East SoHo bistro is casual. Le Jardin comes by its Gallic authenticity just by shrugging its shoulders and being itself: white paper clothes the tables, one fork does duty for two courses, and the best wines are rustic regionals. The brick-paved, canvas-roofed garden is bucolic, big, and gorgeous; the simple salon inside has yellow walls and bourgeois lace curtains. The food is abundant, unpretentious, bighearted. Animated tables are the consequence.

Though the mustard-colored menu appears to be handwritten, the dishes seldom change. Dog days or not, you can stretch your bathing suit with a wintry cassoulet, its goose-fatty beans crowded with duck confit and smoked sausage. It comes in the same bottomless aluminum cauldron as its obverse, the bouillabaisse; Le Jardin's version is rich in fish, chewy with barely cooked tomatoes and parsley, anchored with saffron and orange zest, and served with toasted baguette rafts, a boat of rouille, and an island of grated Gruyère. It makes companions jealous, even when they're pleased with their own slices of country terrine, their perfect *moules frites,* their huge coq au vin or grainy hanger steak or grilled-tuna salad niçoise, or with a special, such as a creamy fettuccine obscured under a forest of morels.

While the pair of handsome headwaiters and the comedy routine of a busboy work at New York speeds, the kitchen sometimes doesn't. Not that you aren't warned: a note on the menu admonishes that good cooking requires patience. And a Parisian street sign on the garden wall reads "rue Rude"—a warning, perhaps, to those who chafe at the pace of a long French family meal. (Open daily for dinner, weekdays for lunch, and weekends for brunch. Entrées $11-$25.)

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A narrow, graffiti-strewn cave packed every evening with new and used bands.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—**MAGIC SLIM AND THE TEARDROPS** (Aug. 8-9) play straight and soul-tinged blues with the best of them.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—**OREN BLOEDOW,** the brains behind Elysian Fields, plays his own granular punk-jazz on Aug. 8. On Aug. 12, **RICHARD X. HEYMAN** brings in his do-it-yourself melodic power pop. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—**MONACO,** with Peter Hook of New Order, entertains on Aug. 6.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Aug. 6: The Belgian pop of **DEUS.** Aug. 9: Post-hardcore noise with **SIX FINGER SATELLITE.** Aug. 11: The itinerant New Orleans jazz band the **FLYING NEUTRINOS.** Aug. 12: Second son **SEAN LENNON.**

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. Australian slide-guitar crazy man **DAVE HOLE** is in on Aug. 8. The **SUSAN TEDESCHI** band takes the stage on Aug. 9.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—A medium-sized, brick-walled haven of a back room where, no matter who's onstage, the listening is a pleasure. Aug. 7: Fuzz and feedback with Connecticut's **GRAND MAL.** On Aug. 11, the coy and ingratiating **JULIANA HATFIELD** brings in postfeminist angst and postadolescent ennui. Aug. 12: Up from Raleigh, North Carolina, **WHISKEYTOWN** spins out some of the best twangy alt-country since Uncle Tupelo.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Aug. 7: **BASEMENT BHANGRA,** an evening full of dance beats from India. Aug. 8: Seventies "disco jazz" vibraphonist **ROY AYERS,** who has influenced the work of A Tribe Called Quest and Monie Love, among others. Aug. 9: Bahian singer **JULIANA AQUINO.** Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—**SPIRITUALIZED** (Aug. 12), one of the best English bands you've never heard of, specializes in neo-psychedelic dream pop and brilliant record packaging. The limited edition of the band's latest disk, "Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space," comes in an aluminum-foil pharmaceutical wrapping; you push out the CD like a giant pill.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—The **FUNKY METERS** swing by on Aug. 8-9, with the **FAMILY STAND.** Founded in the mid-sixties by keyboardist Art Neville, the Meters are to New Orleans R. & B. what the MGs are to Memphis soul: the real thing. Their hits—"Sophisticated Cissy," "Chicken Strut"—define funk at its leanest and toughest. The Family Stand ushered in the nineties with an emotional blast of funk, rock, and soul that featured smart lyrics, precise architecture, and three heaven-sent vocalists. After a three-year split, the Brooklyn group is back with a new lead singer and some high-spirited summer club dates. Aug. 11-12: Best known as the musical force behind the Fugees, **WYCLEF JEAN** has just released his first solo record, "Wyclef Jean Presents the Carnival," a remarkable multi-culti rap-and-pop collection that demonstrates the musical influences of a childhood spent in Haiti, Brooklyn, and New Jersey.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Jerry Week continues: Aug. 6-7 sees the *n*th reunion of **MOBY GRAPE** (Maby Grope, the Legendary Grape, the Melvilles, etc.). This one might be magic. On Aug. 8, keyboardist **MERL SAUNDERS,** who taught Garcia how to play again after his 1986 diabetic coma, comes in with the Rainforest Band.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Ivan Albright: Magic Realist," a comprehensive retrospective of the Chicago-based painter (1897-1983) of moral rot and deliquescent flesh. The works are far removed from modernist taste, and their hamminess can be tiresome, especially in such a large dose, but they certainly stand out. Remember the 1945 M-G-M version of "The Picture of Dorian Gray"? It was Albright who provided the picture, a grotesque masterpiece that is one of the highlights of this show. His work is icky but compelling, and this is one of the Met's best recent exhibitions of contemporary art. Through Sept. 7. . . . ¶ "Georgia O'Keeffe: A Portrait by Alfred Stieglitz" comprises eighty-one photographs of the painter, thirty of which have rarely been exhibited. Through Oct. 5. . . . ¶ "The Gods of War: Sacred Imagery and the Decoration of Arms and Armor," a thought-provoking installation of sixty-five beautiful objects of warfare. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Objects of Desire: The Modern Still Life," an exhibition devoted to domestic arrangements, from Cézanne's apples to Warhol's Campbell's soup cans. Through Aug. 26. . . . ¶ "Untitled Film Stills," sixty-nine black-and-white photographs in which Cindy Sherman poses as the protagonist of a variety of noir films. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "Paris/The 1890s," a beautifully mounted, scholarly exhibition of the graphic arts in Paris during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The show ranges far and wide, from a spectacular color lithograph of Cèzanne's "Bathers" to pretty pink wallpaper by Maurice Denis. There are many things you would expect (Toulouse-Lautrec's posters for the Moulin Rouge), but many more surprises, such as Vuillard's sole poster commission, for a sports drink called Bècane, and a champagne ad by Bonnard. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "Stenberg Brothers: Constructing a Revolution in Soviet Design," an excellent summer show of Constructivist film posters. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ The Project 60 room has been turned over to figurative paintings by three ultra-hip practitioners of the genre: John Currin's poisonous portraits of fashion victims; Luc Tuyman's wispy, low-key "unimages" (a door handle, a glove)—things so boring that they verge on non-being; and Elizabeth Peyton's glossy, seductive portraits of pop stars and gay boys. Laura Hoptman's essay accompanying the exhibition is exceptionally intelligent. Through Sept. 8. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"From Dürer to Rauschenberg: A Quintessence of Drawing." A coöperative venture with Vienna's Albertina Graphics Collection presents masterpieces of draftsmanship, from finished portraits to sketchbook whimsies, by seventeen artists, including Raphael, Rembrandt, Fragonard, Kandinsky, and Beuys. Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ Large-scale sculpture by the Basque minimalist Cristina Iglesias, who favors forthright urban materials—concrete, iron, glass, etc.—and delicately etched surfaces. Through Sept. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"Reversible Destiny: Arakawa/Gins," two collaborative installations by the artists Arakawa and Madeline Gins which add up to one of the poorest museum shows in recent memory. Their background is plainly Conceptualism, but it's unclear what ideas the artists wish to propound—they tout the destruction of the barriers between art and life, but all you get to look at are a lot of poorly designed text panels and some hideous architectural models. Through Aug. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

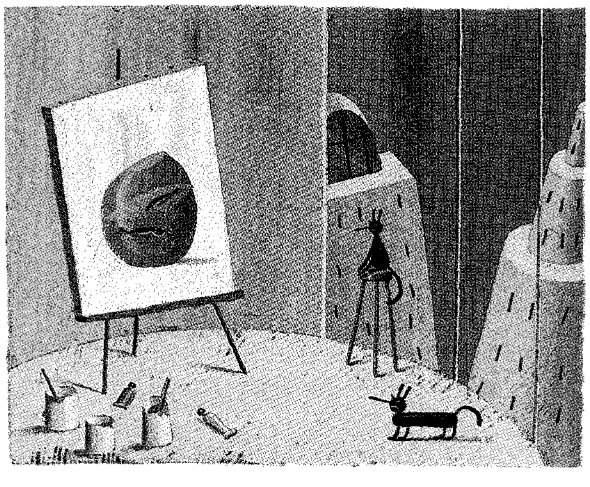
Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Designs for an American Landscape, 1922-32," a meticulously curated exhibition of drawings and exquisitely finished architectural models for five utopian resort projects that the Master envisioned for the American wilderness but that were never built. Through Aug. 31. . . . ¶ The Keith Haring retrospective gathers early drawings, graffiti, subway posters, large-scale paintings, photographs, videos, and personal memorabilia of the artist, who died in 1990. Through Sept. 21. . . . ¶ Twenty-five photographs by Larry Fink, of boxers and their camp followers. Through Sept. 7. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—"The Lost World: The Life and Death of Dinosaurs." Fossils, time lines, and a re-creation of a paleontological dig, displayed in the shadow of a seventy-foot-long reconstruction of a mamenchisaurus. Through Sept. 30. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"The Hands of Rodin." More than fifty bronze studies of an extremity the sculptor was quite smitten with. Through Sept. 28. . . . ¶ "Process on Paper: Recent Acquisitions." Prints (Lyonel Feininger, Louise Bourgeois, Vito Acconci), drawings (John Singer Sargent, Kiki Smith), and photographs (Roy De Carava, Lorna Simpson) demonstrate the technical range of works on paper. Through Sept. 28. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535)—"The Art of Toshiko Takaezu" follows the development of the ceramist from her utilitarian works of the fifties to her continuing experiments in closed forms and colored glazes. Through Nov. 2. . . . ¶ "On the Cutting Edge: Contemporary Quilts from the Collection" presents eleven quilts that use painterly strategies—abstraction, narrative, and, in one case, actual paint. Through Nov. 2. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—The seventy-five photographs in "Picturing Hong Kong: Photography 1855-1910" open a window onto one of the most fascinating places on earth. Many of the portraits and scenes of everyday life were produced as tourist souvenirs; other images (for example, twelve decapitated pirates from Kowloon, their heads neatly set beside them on the beach) have the graphic immediacy of classic photojournalism. Through Aug. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)



MARTIN JARRIE

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse (718-681-6000)—"Against the Tide" gathers works by five Chinese-born women artists who take domestic detritus as their medium. Hou Wen Yi, for example, embeds cigarettes and tampon wrappers in handmade paper. Yin Xiuxhen unravels old sweaters and reknits them together. Cai Jin paints banana leaves on mattresses and seat cushions. Through Sept. 14. (Open Wednesdays, 3 to 9; Thursdays and Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—"Driving Fashion: Automobile Fabrics of the 1950s" explores the affinities between women's wear and auto upholstery: examples of auto styling from Detroit's golden era (vinyl bucket seats, in fern with mint-green trim and piping, from the '57 Thunderbird) appear alongside designs of equally forthright color and similarly space-age inspiration by Dior, Norell, and Claire McCardell. Through Oct. 4. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Schomburg Center, Malcolm X Blvd. at 135th St. (491-2200)—"America's Reconstruction: People and Politics After the Civil War." An exhibition that captures the political and social achievements of that brief era with historical documents (the Emancipation Proclamation, a Klan screed) and more mundane objects (a ballot box, a carpetbag, a Union Army button from the freedmen's village of Mitchville, South Carolina). Through Nov. 1. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"Roland F. Pease Collection"—An agreeable selection of American painting which concentrates on the small: Helen Frankenthaler's perfectly elegant two-foot-square "Orange Painting"; an evocative floral still-life by Larry Rivers; a splendid, dynamic Grace Hartigan "Venus and Adonis," after Rubens; a prim portrait of the collector by Fairfield Porter. The largest work is a Kenneth Noland stripe painting. The tiniest, an abstraction by Ron Gorchov, is smaller than a postcard. Through Aug. 8. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050.)

Group Shows—At **DC MOORE,** 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (247-2111): Real and imagined aerial views, by photographers and painters. Through Aug. 14. . . . **EQUITABLE,** Seventh Ave. at 51st St. (554-4818): Work by Haitian painters, from the collection of Jonathan Demme. Through Aug. 16. . . . **GRAHAM,** 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (535-5767): Sculptures, by Michael Ashkin, Ron Baron, Roxy Paine, and George Stoll, among others. Through Aug. 29. . . . **SNYDER,** 20 W. 57th St. (262-1160): An omnibus exhibition covering the past sixty years of geometric abstraction, with work by Ilya Bolotowsky, Alfred Jensen, Frank Stella, and their circle. Through Aug. 15. . . . **TAIPEI GALLERY,** Sixth Ave. at 48th St. (373-1842): Ink paintings by Taiwanese artists. Through Aug. 29. . . . **WERNER,** 21 E. 67th St. (988-1623): Paintings by Baselitz, Lüpertz, Kirkeby, and Leroy. Through Sept. 6.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Stefan Altenburger—"Let's Make Things Better," a video installation by the young Swiss artist. The front gallery includes ramshackle sculptures made of cardboard, crates, and miscellaneous detritus from the streets of New York; a video of the artist giving a performance amid the junk is projected on the wall. In the rear are photographs and video sculptures. The work is evenly pitched between engaging and annoying. Through Aug. 8. (Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. 243-3753.)

Claus Prokop—Acrylics on wood by the Austrian painter. Through Aug. 29. (Art Resources Transfer, 504 W. 22nd St. 691-5956.)

Group Shows—At **clementine,** 526 W. 26th St. (243-5937): Drawings, paintings, photographs, collages, performance art, and sculptures by Luke Dowd, Karen Kimmel, Amy Eshoo, and friends. Through Aug. 16. . . . **nosei,** 530 W. 22nd St. (741-8695): The gallery's international assembly includes Ghada Amer (Egypt), Arturo Duclos (Chile), Daniele Galliano (Italy), and Manuel Ocampo (Philippines). Through Aug. 18.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

"Points of Contact"—A selection of work from the 1997 Triangle International Artists' Workshop (an annual affair organized fifteen years ago by Anthony Caro), brimming with interesting art from around the world: altered photocopies of pale, empty highway vistas, by Jaclyn Shoub (Canada); vibrant neo-Op stripes on panels shaped like television tubes, by Paul Dignan (Scotland); a lovely Gustonesque abstraction, by Catherine Hachon (France); sculptures in straw and metal, drawing on tribal themes, by David Chirwa (Zambia); and an exquisite, jazzy deconstruction of Abstract Expressionism, in swirling spatters of latex house paint, by David Fratkin (United States). Through Aug. 15. (Fiterman, 30 West Broadway. 346-8872.)

Group Shows—At **sean kelly,** 43 Mercer St. (343-2405): Drawings by Ed Ruscha, Julião Sarmento, Calum Innes, and friends. Through Sept. 5. . . . **wooster gardens,** 558 Broadway (941-6210): A canicular showing of work by Richard Artschwager, Svetlana Kopystiansky, and Kara Walker, among others. Through Aug. 8.

Short List—**june ahrens and rochelle rauchberg,** SoHo 20, at 545 Broadway. 226-4167. Through Aug. 9. . . . **wade hoefer,** Knowlton, 568 Broadway. 966-2625. Through Aug. 19. . . . **j. abbot miller,** Rosen, 130 Prince St. 941-0203. Through Aug. 22.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Virtual Vacation—The auction scene all but evaporates during the hot months, but Swann Galleries is providing a bit of off-season excitement for homebound New Yorkers with an auction of nearly four hundred vintage posters, mostly on travel themes, which offer opportunities for escapist daydreams, from the general ("Play Golf in Germany," 1927) to the specific ("Grande Semaine du Poisson, Boulogne sur Mer," 1923). (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Aug. 6 at 2:30.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

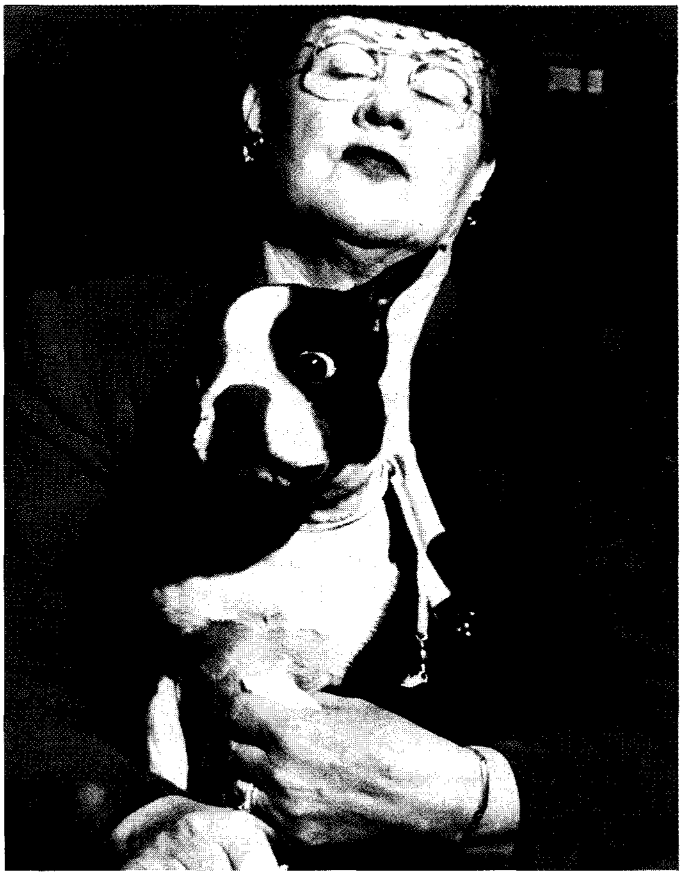
Lillian Bassman—A retrospective of fashion work and personal projects by the onetime *Harper's Bazaar* editor and contributor. Through Aug. 16. (Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. 217-5800. Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Larry Fink / Jock Sturges—This social documentarian's knack for capturing the hard-edged sadness in the lives of his subjects stands out here in a dozen pictures from the Pennsylvania boxing circuit. Welcome glimpses of humor brighten some of the other pictures, including two shots at a black-tie affair and a handful of images from recent Presidential primaries. (A show of the artist's boxing photographs is at the Whitney Museum, through Sept. 7.) / Nude portraits of girls made in California, Ireland, and France. Both shows through Aug. 29. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

Lisette Model (1901-83)—A retrospective of the photographer and teacher's career, from the collection of the International Center of Photography. Through Sept. 19. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. 713-2885.)

Marc Riboud—Pictures the globe-trotting French photojournalist shot in China over the past forty years. Through Sept. 14. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

"Adolescents"—Images of inscrutable youth, including a desperately chic high-school graduate, by August Sander (one of six by the photographer), and a tall, angry tomboy wielding a baseball bat in the middle of an empty New York street—an early Diane Arbus. Also on view are works by Ellen Brooks, Mike Disfarmer, Judith Joy Ross, Adam Bartos, and Rineke Dijkstra. Through Aug. 15. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Closed Mondays.)



"Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show," by Lisette Model, in a retrospective at the PaineWebber Building.

ICP PERMANENT COLLECTION

"Backyards"—An appealing survey of domestic spaces, from the sprawling, uneasy suburbs to the crowded but genial city. Elijah Gowin, once the subject of pictures by his father, Emmet, shows here for the first time; his view of a toy horse suspended in a vine-covered shed has a good deal of Southern mystery to it. There's a Weegee of a shirtless man sleeping on his fire escape, a beautiful Ray K. Metzker near-abstraction from Albuquerque, and a dark, talismanic 1971 Mapplethorpe, of Patti Smith behind a screen door, topless. Other great works come from Garry Winogrand, Joe Deal, Abelardo Morell, Larry Fink, Mary Berridge, and Lee Friedlander. Through Aug. 15. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223.)

"Horsing Around"—Subtitled "A Frisky History of Equines in New York City Parks," this fifty-strong show of horses at work, at play, and cast in bronze reaches back to 1860 for its imagery. Through Sept. 4. (Arsenal gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. 360-8163. Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 5.)

"Mother Jones–Leica Documentary Photography Awards"—The winners of the 1997 awards include Peter Magubane, Nadia Benchallal, Steve Hart, Wu Jialin, and Ljalja Kuznetsova. Through Aug. 29. (UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza. 824-6869.)

"New Narratives"—A young-artists show of real-life and staged scenarios, including very fine Southern portraits, by Mark Steinmetz, an eerie winter scene, by Panos Kokkinias, and busy color tableaux of the Joe Camel generation, by Ashley Thayer. Through Aug. 20. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Closed Mondays.)

"Oh Boy!"—A large show of both playful and solemn interpretations of that phrase, such as two urinating tots, one by Manuel Alvarez Bravo and one—perilously close to a wading pool—by Jill Freedman; a strutting New Orleans brass band and crowd, by William Claxton; and a newsboy from 1915, by Lewis Hine. Other artists with work on view include Evelyn Hofer, Danny Lyon, Jill Seymour, Graciela Iturbide, Victor Friedman, and Walker Evans. Through Aug. 8. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Closed Mondays.)

"Summer Pleasures"—The beach, the porch, the open road: estival imagery from the likes of Lartigue, Cartier-Bresson, Dahl-Wolfe, LaChapelle, and Turbeville. Through Sept. 6. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

"Water"—This summer's obligatory H_2O-fest looks mighty refreshing, with works on hand by William Henry Fox Talbot, August Sander, Robert Adams, Harry Callahan, Sally Mann, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Emmet Gowin, and Philip-Lorca diCorcia. Through Aug. 29. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Closes Fridays at 4.)

Group Shows—At **marks,** 523 W. 24th St. (243-0200): Landscapes and portraits by Uta Barth, Rineke Dijkstra, Tracey Moffatt, and Inez van Lamsweerde. Through Aug. 29. . . . **rice,** 325 W. 11th St. (366-6660): A roundup of gallery artists which includes works by Craig Barber, Danielle Epstein, Andrea Gentl, and José Picayo. Through Aug. 23. (Open Thursdays through Saturdays, 1 to 7; Sundays, 1 to 6.) . . . **winston wächter,** 111 E. 65th St. (327-2526): Atmospheric black-and-white interiors and landscapes by Jean Kallina, color landscapes by Joel Meyerowitz, and lenticular 3-D photographs by Linda Girvin. Through Aug. 22.

Short List—**marilyn bridges,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Closed Mondays, open Saturdays; through Aug. 23. . . . **marianne courville,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through Aug. 15. . . . **charles henri ford** and **allen frame,** Tonkonow, 601 W. 26th St. 255-8450. Closed Mondays, opens at 1; both shows through Aug. 15. . . . **eldon garnet,** Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. 780-0071. Closed Mondays, open Saturdays; through Aug. 23. . . . **erich hartmann,** Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051. Closed Mondays, opens Saturdays at noon; through Aug. 9. . . . **helen levitt** and **lauren greenfield,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; both shows through Sept. 7.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Asia Society.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

IN TOWN

MOSTLY MOZART—Aug. 6 at 8: Despite her well-earned reputation as a Mozartean, the distinguished German pianist Ingrid Haebler made her Mostly Mozart début only two years ago. In her welcome return, she performs Mozart's final piano concerto (in B-Flat Major, K. 595). Also on the program are the composer's Symphony No. 31 (the “Paris”) and Violin Concerto No. 3 (with Elmar Oliveira), plus Haydn's Symphony No. 102. Jesus Lopez-Cobos conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 8: Another cause for celebration: this summer Mostly Mozart is presenting some smaller-scale recitals in Alice Tully Hall. In this concert, soprano Barbara Bonney and fortepianist Melvyn Tan offer songs by Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert, with clarinettist Charles Neidich assisting in the latter's “Der Hirt auf dem Felsen.” . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 8: In the first of five concerts exploring the musical love affair between Mozart and the city of Prague, Adam Fischer conducts the Festival Orchestra in the composer's “Don Giovanni” Overture, D-Minor Piano Concerto (featuring Ivan Moravec), and Symphony No. 38 (the “Prague”), as well as in a pair of concert arias (with soprano Amanda Roocroft). (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 8: Mr. Fischer and the orchestra perform Mozart's “La Clemenza di Tito” Overture, his Symphony No. 38, and a pair of his concert arias (with Ms. Roocroft), as well as Jan Ladislav Dussek's Concerto in B-Flat Major for Two Pianos (featuring Anthony and Joseph Paratore). (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8: Members and guests of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center present solo and chamber works by Mozart, František Xaver Dušek, Leopold Kozeluch, Jan Křtitel Vanhal, Joseph Fiala, Josef Mysliveček, and Jan Václav Stich (an eminent bass-horn player whom listeners might also know under the alias Giovanni Punto, which is what his friends Mozart and Beethoven called him). (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 6:30: A free performance of chamber music for woodwind ensembles, by Karl Stamitz, Mysliveček, František Kramár, and Mozart, performed by the Sylvan Winds. (North Plaza, Lincoln Center.) . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8: Haydn's “The Creation,” performed by the Festival Orchestra and the New York Chamber Symphony Chorus, with soloists Jane Thorngren (soprano), Stanford Olsen (tenor), and Charles Austin (bass). Gerard Schwarz conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8: The Prague-based Prazak String Quartet performs Mozart's C-Major Quartet (K. 465, the “Dissonance”), Jakub Jan Ryba's D-Minor Quartet, a divertimento by Franz Xaver Richter, and Mozart's G-Minor String Quintet (with violist Cynthia Phelps assisting). (Alice Tully Hall.) (For tickets to all Mostly Mozart events, call 721-6500.)

NEW AMERICAN CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Trinity Church's Brahms series continues with performances of the composer's String Sextet No. 1 and Clarinet Quintet. (Broadway at Wall St. Aug. 7 at 1. Admission by contribution.)

BARGEMUSIC—Aug. 7 at 7:30 and Aug. 10 at 4: Presenting Prokofiev's Flute Sonata (Op. 94a), Brahms's Piano Quintet, and Schubert's String Trio in B-Flat Major (D. 581). . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 7:30: Quartets by Haydn (in B-Flat Major, Op. 71, No. 1), Bartók (his Third), and Mendelssohn (in E Minor, Op. 44, No. 2), played by the Brentano String Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

SUMMERGARDEN—The outdoor concert series in the Museum of Modern Art's Sculpture Garden continues as the Magellan String Quartet performs works by Osvaldo Golijov (his “Yiddishbbuk”), Tan Dun (“Eight Colors for String Quartet”), Stravinsky (“Double Canon Raoul Dufy in Memoriam”), Bernard Rands, and Julián Orbón. (14 W. 54th St. Aug. 8-9 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

IMMANUEL DAVIS—Flutist. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. Aug. 10 at noon.)

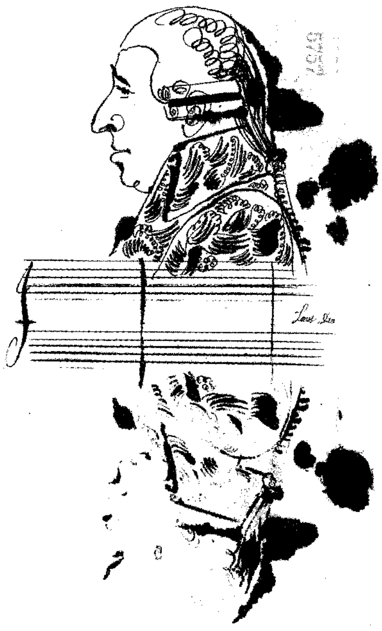
SALON SOIRÉES—Songs, piano works, and chamber music by Brahms, performed by mezzo-soprano Keren Bernbaum, clarinettist Neal Rynston, and pianist Eleonor Bindman. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Aug. 10 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

YURI KIM—Pianist, performing works by Beethoven and Chopin. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Aug. 11 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

PANOCHA STRING QUARTET—The Czech foursome plays quartets by Haydn (in B Minor, Op. 55, No. 2), Martinů (his Fifth), and Smetana (his First, “From My Life”). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Aug. 12 at 5:45.)

OUT OF TOWN

TANGLEWOOD—Aug. 6 at 8:30: The Juilliard String Quartet performs quartets by Mendelssohn (in E-Flat Major, Op. 12), Copland (“Three Pieces”), and Schubert (in D Minor, the “Death and the Maiden”). . . . ¶ Aug. 7 at 8:30: Clarinettist Richard Stoltzman and pianist Lukas Foss perform music by Gershwin, Copland, Bernstein, Mr. Foss, and others. . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 8:30: The Boston Symphony performs Bach's Fifth “Brandenburg” Concerto, Mr. Foss's “Renaissance Concerto,” Bizet's Symphony, and François Borne's “Fantaisie Brillante sur ‘Carmen’ ”; Seiji Ozawa and Mr. Foss conduct, and flutist James Galway, violinist Tamara Smirnova, and Mr. Foss (as pianist) are the soloists. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 8:30: Charles Dutoit leads the Boston Symphony in Berlioz's “Roman Carnival Overture,” Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Yefim Bronfman), and Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 2:30: Mr. Dutoit and the Boston Symphony perform Ravel's “Le Tombeau de Couperin” and “La Valse,” in addition to cello concertos by Christopher Rouse and Haydn (in C Major), both featuring Yo-Yo Ma. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 8:30: As part of Tanglewood's 1997 Festival of Contemporary Music, advanced student musicians present works by Shostakovich, Wolfgang Rihm, György Kurtág, and Sofia Gubaidulina. . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 8:30: Ursula Oppens performs piano works written for her by Tobias Picker and Conlon Nancarrow, as well as pieces by Charles Wuorinen, Frederic Rzewski (including “Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues”), and Elliott Carter. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8:30: Works by Shih-Hui Chen, Mark Anthony Turnage, Mr. Rouse, and Jacob Druckman, performed by Tanglewood students. (Lenox, Mass. 413-637-1600.)



Franz Joseph Haydn, celebrated at the Bard Music Festival.

ELVIS SWIFT

CARAMOOR—Final classical concerts of the season. Aug. 7 at 4:15: Pianist Terrence Wilson performs Schumann's Humoreske, Chopin's Sonata in B-Flat Minor, and Ravel's “Gaspard de la Nuit.” . . . ¶ Aug. 8 at 8: John Browning offers Mozart's F-Major Piano Sonata (K. 533, which concludes with Mozart's own revision of a rondo—composed several years before the rest of the sonata—that leads an independent life as K. 494), works by Chopin (including the Scherzo in C-Sharp Minor), Conrad Cumming's “Silhouettes,” and Barber's Interlude No. 1 and Piano Sonata. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 5:30: Young artists perform Arensky's A-Minor String Quartet (for the odd combination of violin, viola, and two cellos), Beethoven's C-Major String Quintet (Op. 29), and Dvořák's A-Major Piano Quintet (Op. 81). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

SEEKING HAYDN—Musicians and scholars descend on the Hudson Valley's Bard Music Festival for two weekends of performances, lectures, and discussions designed to illuminate the endlessly fascinating legacy of Franz Joseph Haydn. Aug. 8 at 8:30: Piano music, a solo cantata, and chamber works from Haydn's maturity. . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 10 A.M.: A panel discussion about Haydn's career. . . . At 2: Songs and instrumental pieces from the composer's years at the Esterházy court. . . . At 8: Works Haydn wrote in an expansive mood: the Symphony No. 98, a Te Deum, the cantata “Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser,” and selections from his last opera, “L'Anima del

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LISTENING BOOTH

ENLIGHTENMENT—If you can't get to Bard College's Haydn festival, which opens this weekend, you can console yourself with three exceptional new recordings. The stringed instrument called the baryton is remembered today only thanks to the hundred-odd pieces Haydn wrote for his patron, Prince Nikolaus I Esterházy, to play on it. Now the Haydn Sinfonietta Wien offers rare performances of four of Haydn's lavish **BARYTON OCTETS** (Koch/Schwann 3-1250-2). Composed around 1775, the pieces not only spotlight the baryton's shimmering timbre but also call forth virtuoso playing from a pair of hornists.

Two exemplary productions illuminate the very end of the composer's career. The **HARMONIEMESSE** (Haydn's last completed work, from 1802) is splendiferously rendered by conductor Sigiswald Kuijken, La Petite Bande (his orchestra), and the Chamber Choir of Namur (Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 05472-77337-2). Expansive, noble, and moving, it has a score that tirelessly explores novel combinations among the musicians (especially the wind players, known to the Viennese as *Harmonie*). The “Quoniam” is positively operatic, and the “Et incarnatus est,” with soprano Sandrine Piau heading a quartet of early-music all-star soloists, is bliss.

You can detect a more personal note in **THE LAST THREE STRING QUARTETS** (Sony Classical Vivarte SK 62731), played by L'Archibudelli on radiant Old Master instruments: violins by Amati and Stradivari, viola by Forster, cello by Goffriller. Despite its Classical attention to balance, Haydn's music is never predictable; and, true to form, surprises lurk around every corner here. The Opus 77 pair (from 1799)—harmonically imaginative, subtle in detail, rich in variety—lead the listener to the brink of Beethoven, and the two-movement D-Minor Quartet (Op. 103, left incomplete in 1803) has a slightly autumnal cast. Its bittersweet Andante Grazioso is played here with proud objectivity—deep sentiment properly filtered through the gauze of the Enlightenment—and its Minuet refuses to “go gentle into that good night.”

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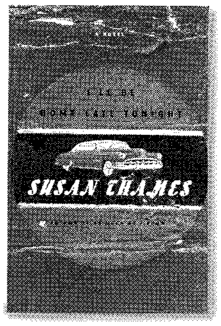
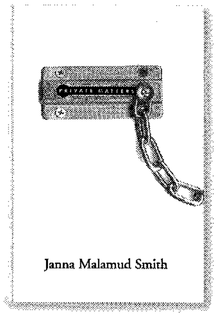


I'll Be Home Late Tonight
by Susan Thames
A troubled woman leaves her husband and takes her adolescent daughter on a three-year car trip through the deep South, where they explore the darker side of sex and love. (Villard)

Play for a Kingdom
by Tom Dyja
As a diversion from the bloody battlefield at Spotsylvania, Union and Confederate soldiers play a series of baseball games with increasingly high stakes. (Harcourt Brace)

Play for a Kingdom
TOM DYJA



Private Matters
by Janna Malamud Smith
How important is privacy in our society today? The author seeks to answer this question by examining issues of privacy in all aspects of our lives. (Addison-Wesley)

Wild Designs
by Katie Fforde
A divorced mother of three teenagers turns her passion for gardening into a business, unearthing a new career—and possibly a new romance. (St. Martins Press)

Wild Designs
Katie Fforde

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Filosofo." Leon Botstein conducts. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 10 A.M.: A round-table conversation about ways that trends in eighteenth-century music publishing contributed to Haydn's popularity. . . . At 1:30: A piano sonata, several songs, a piano trio, and two string quartets, all dating from the composer's London residencies during the seventeen-nineties. . . . At 4:30: A concert performance of Haydn's opera "L'Infedeltà Delusa." (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 914-758-3226. Through Aug. 17. Pre-concert lectures begin a half hour before each performance.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS—Aug. 9 at 8: Recorder player Aldo Abreu and harpsichordist John Gibbons present works by Corelli, Bach, Couperin, and others. . . . ¶ Aug. 10 at 3: The Raphael Trio performs Schubert's String Trio in B-Flat Major (D. 581), in addition to Beethoven's G-Major Piano Trio (Op. 1, No. 2) and his "Kakadu" Variations (Op. 121). (Woodstock, N.Y. 914-679-8217.)

BRIDGEHAMPTON CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL—Opening concerts of the festival's fourteenth season, which continues through Aug. 24. Aug. 10 at 6:30: Works by Mozart, David Del Tredici, Kenji Bunch, and Dvořák (his Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major, Op. 87). . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 8: Compositions by Clara Schumann (her Three Romances for Violin and Piano), her husband, Robert (his Three Romances for Oboe—here played on flute—and Piano Quintet), and their very close friend Brahms (his G-Major String Quintet). (Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church, Montauk Highway. 516-537-3507.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

DRAGON BOAT RACES—According to Chinese legend, when an exiled, reform-minded minister from the state of Chou attempted to commit suicide by jumping into the Mi Lo River, in 278 B.C., the local fishermen sped out in their boats to try and save him—thus originating the sport of dragon-boat racing. For two weekends each August, the lake in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, in Queens, fills up with thirty-nine-foot-long teak boats, each packed with a helmsman, a drummer, and from ten to eighteen rowers. This first weekend, more than forty teams from the metropolitan area vie for the right to return a week later for the North American Championship Race; the winning team will travel to Hong Kong next June to compete for the international title. (Aug. 9-10, from 11:30 to 5. For more information, call 265-3401.)

"HOMEMADE INSTRUMENT DAY"—As part of its annual Out-of-Doors Festival, Lincoln Center presents performances and workshops that would make the American composer Harry Partch smile. The performers include Joshua Fried (shoe soles and drumsticks), Laetitia Sonami (an electrically wired black Lycra lady's glove), and a host of other musicians playing equally innovative instruments. Homemade-instrument specialists Carolyn Weber and Skip LaPlant explain how the various contraptions work and instruct the adventurous in how to make them. Garden hoses, funnels, peanut-butter jars, and the like will be provided. (Aug. 9, from 2 to 9. For more information, call 875-5108.)

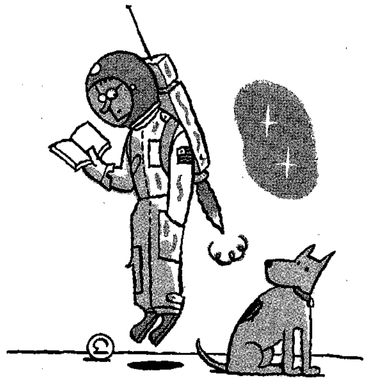
READINGS—Aug. 6 at 6:30: Poets Safiya Henderson-Holmes, Dean Kostos, and Barbara Lekatsas read their work in the open air. (Union Square Park. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Aug. 11 at 7: Critic Laurie Stone reads from her essay collection, "Laughing in the Dark: A Decade of Subversive Comedy." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 7:30: Robert Bingham reads short stories from his recent book, "Pure Slaughter Value." (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary.)

WALK—Aug. 12 at 11 A.M.: Arne Abramowitz, of the Hudson River Park Conservancy, leads a waterfront tour from Chambers Street to 59th Street. For reservations, which are required, call 935-3960.

BOOK CURRENTS

Martian Chronicles

LANDING a probe on Mars is all well and good, but when are we going to get a person up there? With an atmosphere that's ninety-five per cent carbon dioxide, it's not many people's idea of a holiday. But Brian Aldiss, a prolific science-fiction writer and co-author of TRILLION YEAR SPREE (Avon), a history of the genre, says, "We should get men on the red planet as soon as possible." He stops short of the plan to "terraform" the planet for human habitation advocated in Robert Zubrin's THE CASE FOR MARS (Free Press). "That's a fascinating book, but let's not muck up the first planet we land on by turning it into a dreary imitation of Earth."



Mars intrigues writers more than any other planet besides our own. Authors used to ignore what hard facts there were, casting the planet as what Aldiss calls "a romantic never-never land." According to him, Edgar Rice Burroughs's A PRINCESS OF MARS (Ballantine) "has all sorts of alien races inhabiting the red planet and women who lay eggs but nevertheless have breasts. Consistency is not his strong point." Writers can't be so cavalier now, with the facts so widely available. For the hard-core Martophile seeking a scientific account, Aldiss recommends Michael Carr's THE SURFACE OF MARS (Yale; currently out of print): "It's dry as Martian dust—very comprehensive."

There's no sign that the increase of factual information about Mars will stop it from spawning exciting fiction. Witness Kim Stanley Robinson's recent MARS TRILOGY (Bantam), in which humans adapt the Martian environment to their own needs, eventually creating a sea. Aldiss has unbounded admiration for MARTIAN TIME-SLIP (Vintage), by Philip K. Dick. "It doesn't hold water now scientifically, but if you use Mars as a metaphor for human isolation, it's an amazing book." Ultimately, Aldiss hopes that scientific advances will help both writers and the public realize their fantasies of the red planet. "I'd sign up for a trip to Mars. I'd like to see it as a sort of Ayers Rock in the sky, where you can commune with the cosmos. It would also be good for a honeymoon."

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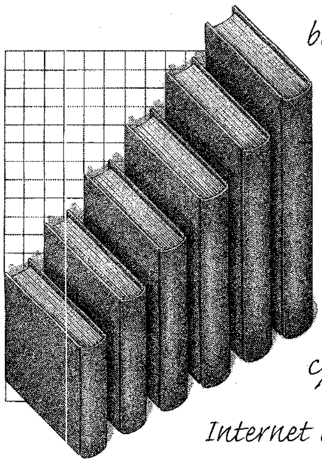

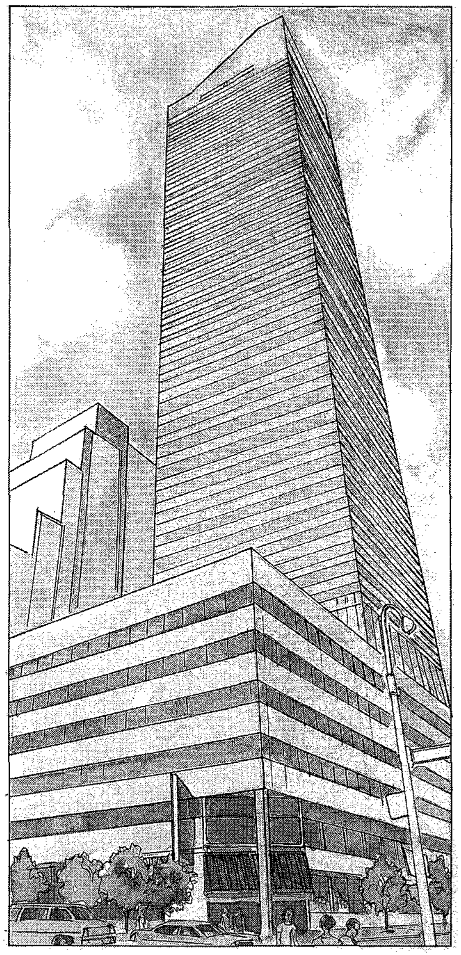

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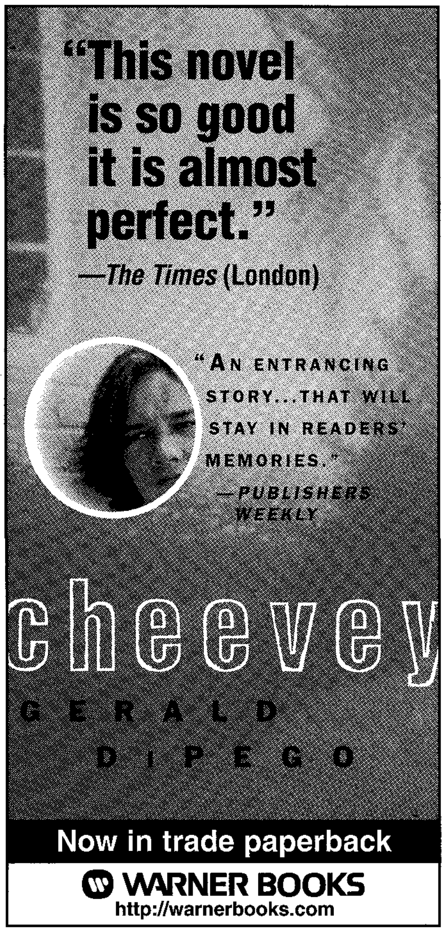
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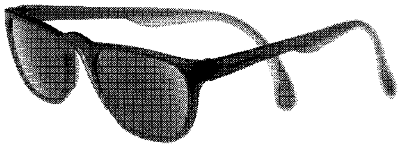
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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

CAREER GIRLS—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening August 8. (Angelika Film Center and Regency.)

CONSPIRACY THEORY—Richard Donner's thriller stars Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts, as a conspiracy-crazed cabdriver and an attorney attempting to find out who or what is trying to control their lives. Opening August 8. (Chelsea West, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

DEF JAM'S HOW TO BE A PLAYER—A comedy in which a ladies' man (Bill Bellamy) gets his comeuppance when the women in his life band together. Directed by Lionel C. Martin. Opening August 6. (84th Street Sixplex, Manhattan Twin, 19th Street East 6, and State.)

FREE WILLY 3: THE RESCUE—The further adventures of a boy (Jason James Richter) and his cetacean friend. Directed by Sam Pillsbury. Opening August 8. (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

HAMSUN—The last seventeen years in the life of Knut Hamsun (Max von Sydow), the Norwegian Nobelist and Nazi sympathizer. Directed by Jan Troell. In Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian. Opening August 6. (Film Forum.)

MOLOM—An aging shaman in Mongolia trains a young boy as his successor, in a film directed by Marie Jaoul de Poncheville. In Mongolian. Opening August 8. (Quad Cinema.)

SOUL IN THE HOLE—Danielle Gardner's documentary about a New York City playground basketball team. Opening August 8. (Embassy 2, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 23.)

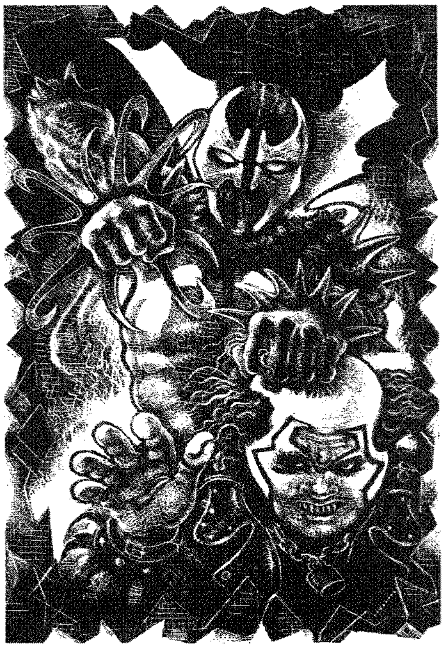
AIR BUD—The adventures of a fatherless boy (Kevin Zegers) and the golden retriever who teaches him how to play basketball. Directed by Charles Martin Smith. (Chelsea Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 3, Lincoln Square, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

AIR FORCE ONE—In Wolfgang Petersen's loopy thriller, Harrison Ford plays President James Marshall, a red-blooded, two-fisted Chief Executive: the virile warrior that Ronald Reagan imagined himself to be in the dark screening room of his mind. When Air Force One is hijacked by Russian terrorists, Marshall turns into a business-suited guerrilla; with loosened tie, he lurks and darts and, when necessary, unleashes rippling bursts of automatic-weapons fire, and succeeds in foiling the plans of the ruthless, goateed head terrorist (Gary Oldman, playing Ming the Merciless to Ford's Flash Gordon). Marshall, we feel, is that rare President who could descend the stairs from Greg Norman's house without fear, laughing in the face of danger. The picture is ludicrous, but its attempt to satisfy the aggressive fantasies of a graying white-male audience is weirdly fascinating. It's something you don't see every day: a geriatric comic book. Also with Glenn Close, Wendy Crewson, Liesel Matthews, Dean Stockwell, and William H. Macy. The screenplay, rich in howlers, is by Andrew W. Marlowe.—T.R. (7/28/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALIVE & KICKING—Nancy Meckler's story of a love affair between a dancer (Jason Flemyng) and a therapist for patients with AIDS (Antony Sher). Written by Martin Sherman. (Quad Cinema.)

BOX OF MOONLIGHT—It's intended as a journey of discovery, but it isn't much of a journey and hardly anything gets discovered. John Turturro looks uncomfortable in the leading role of Al Fountain, an orderly, not to say boring, construction manager who finds himself at loose ends in the middle of nowhere. He hires a car and drives around, searching for a scene from his childhood but finding only weirdos. One of them is called the Kid (Sam Rockwell), a throwback in buckskins, and, for some reason, Al stays with him and gets stuck in the woods. The same thing happens to the movie; Tom DiCillo, the writer and director, makes the curious decision to dull the quick-witted rhythms of his previous picture, "Living in Oblivion," in favor of something more loping and whimsical.—A.L. (8/4/97) (Lincoln Square.)

BRASSED OFF—Mark Herman's surprisingly enjoyable study of the effect of brass-band music on a depressed mining community in the North of England. Pete Postlethwaite stars as the bandleader, Danny. The miners' main reason to keep playing is the arrival of the bewitching Gloria (Tara Fitzgerald), who is actually working for the people who are planning to shut the pit down. The movie emerges, to Herman's great credit, not as stiff dialectic but as kindly, flexible farce.—A.L. (5/26/97) (Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)



Mark Dippé's "Spawn."

SCOTT GILLIS

CAFÉ SOCIETY—Writer-director Raymond De Felitta's true-life tale of the events leading to the 1952 arrest and subsequent conviction of the New York playboy Mickey Jelke on vice charges. (The Screening Room.)

CHASING AMY—In Kevin Smith's low-budget comedy, a young comic-book artist (Ben Affleck) falls in love with a pretty, vivacious blonde (Joey Lauren Adams), who is, inconveniently, a lesbian. Smith doesn't have the skill to maintain a pleasurable sense of anticipation for an entire movie; this picture, his third, is as crummy-looking and as sluggishly paced as his début feature, the 1994 "Clerks."—T.R. (4/7/97) (Carnegie Hall Cinemas and First & 62nd Cinemas.)

CONTACT—Jodie Foster plays Ellie, a scientist of nervous disposition who spends her days listening for radio signals from space. One day, space calls and leaves a message. There's barely a smile, let alone a good laugh, in Robert Zemeckis's boggy movie, unless you count Matthew McConaughey in the richly ridiculous part of a religious thinker.—A.L. (7/21/97) (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Face/Off—In John Woo's latest action extravaganza, the good guy (John Travolta) and the bad guy (Nicolas Cage) literally exchange faces and voices. Incredibly, Woo seems not to have recognized that this story can be treated only as a joke. He takes a full hour to plod through the exposition and after that portentous buildup the high-concept gag produces no more than a tiny, disappointing spark, like a damp firecracker.—T.R. (7/14/97) (Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly.)

4 Little Girls—A documentary by Spike Lee, about the 1963 church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama. (The Screening Room.)

George of the Jungle—An old animated cartoon is the very scant basis for this live-action Disney movie, which consists essentially of George (Brendan Fraser) talking to the animals and swinging around on vines, smashing into trees. While the film attempts some "Tarzan"-like plotting (George meets and falls in love with a girl; he has a New York adventure) and trifles around with some environmental advocacy, the director, Sam Weisman, keeps it easygoing. Fraser, buffed to an almost Fabio-like glow, is adorably clumsy, but the real scene-stealer is George's pet elephant, Shep, who thinks he's a dog—computer-generated imagery allows him to fetch sticks, scratch behind his ears, and bound happily around.—B.D. (Chelsea West, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 4, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

Good Burger—Two teen-agers (Kel Mitchell and Kenan Thompson) take a summer job at a neighborhood restaurant battling a large chain, in a comedy directed by Brian Robbins. (Art Greenwich Twin, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6. . . . ¶ Embassy 2; through Aug. 7.)

Guantanamera—Juan Carlos Tabio and the late Tomás Gutiérrez Alea teamed up to direct this picaresque road trip across present-day Cuba, and it's a charmer. Riding in one car are a sad, beautiful woman (Mirtha Ibarra) and her awful husband, a Communist-toadie undertaker (Carlos Cruz) who's devised a grotesque scheme to transport corpses cheaply; riding in a truck nearby is a farmer (Jorge Perugorria) who once knew the beauty and still carries a torch for her. It's a given that these two will get together, but the best shots simply look out through the windshield and capture life along the Cuban highway: people begging for rides, bartering with bananas, eating in clandestine cafés. In every transaction there's a haunting combination of wit and despair. In Spanish.—S.K. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

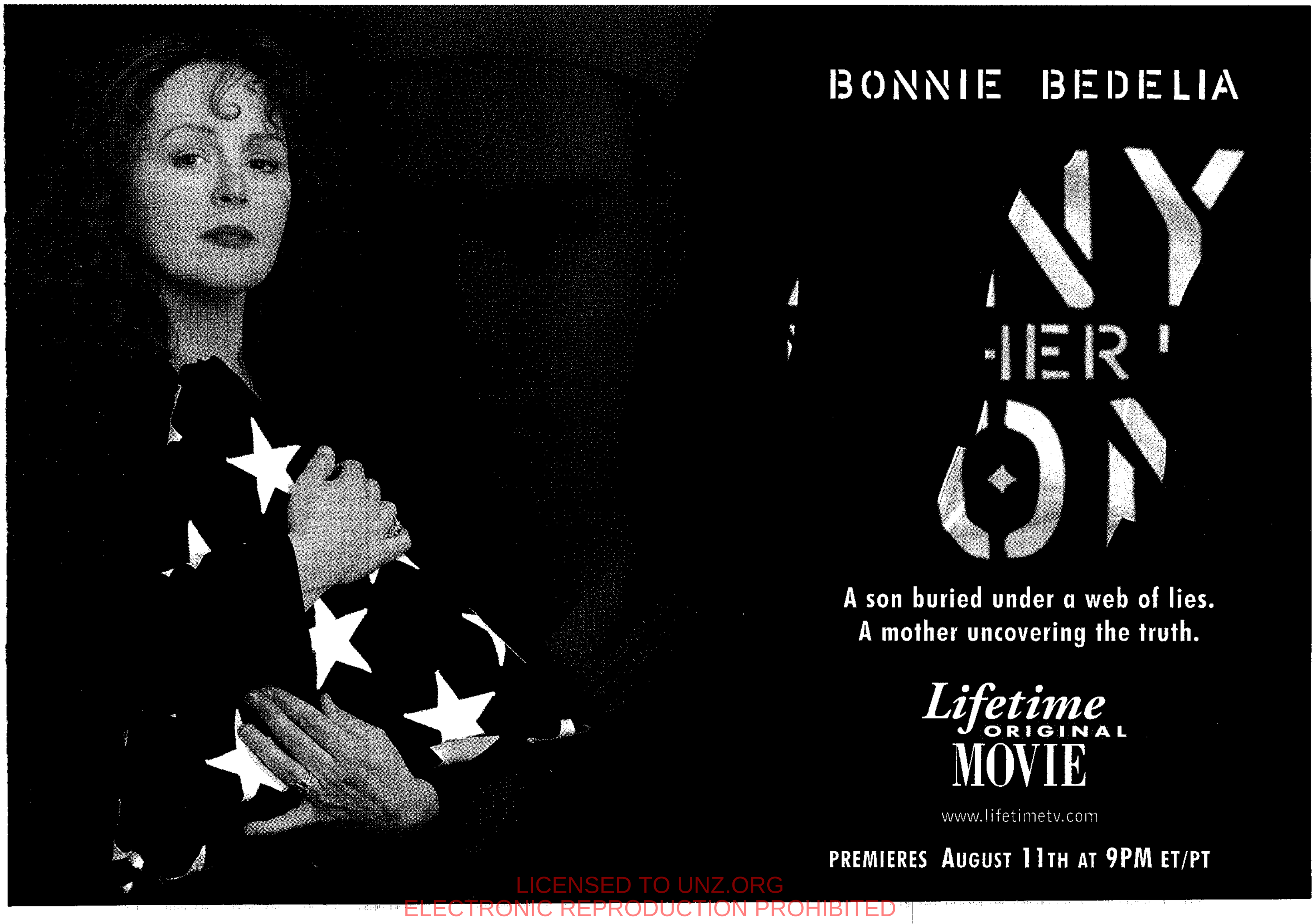
Hercules—The new Disney animated adventure feels secondhand: the youthful hero is an obvious retread of Aladdin, and the scary ambush sequence is set in exactly the same kind of valley that trapped Simba in "The Lion King." The only good news is the presence of James Woods as the voice of evil. Otherwise, the picture is distinguished only in its unblushing will to sell itself and its spinoff products.—A.L. (7/7/97) (Guild, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Village East Cinemas.)

In the Company of Men—In Neil LaBute's audacious first film, two executives (Aaron Eckhart and Matt Malloy), feeling humiliated by their girlfriends, come up with a plan to date a deaf secretary (Stacy Edwards) and then dump her. If LaBute's sole purpose had been to show off these two misogynists, the film would be a pretty tasteless affair, but the twists of the plot turn it into a black-hearted examination of power and manipulation, as dark and as uncomfortable to watch as the best of Mamet. The static presentation—rare camera movement and minimal editing—makes the audience co-conspirators: you feel as though you're right next to the characters, eavesdropping. In many ways the movie is the evil twin of last year's boys' story, "Swingers," and the handsome Eckhart's performance is so horrifically, convincingly soulless that it may bring him the kind of attention Vince Vaughn received for that sunnier film. This one is a cold, precise, unshakable tour de force.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Kiss Me, Guido—A dumb lug (Nick Scotti) from Arthur Avenue, in the Bronx, goes to Manhattan and, through a series of mishaps, moves in with a gay man (Anthony Barrile). Tony Vitale's blunt attempt at lighthearted comedy tries hard to sell itself as a slice of New York life, but the simpleminded humor (an Italian mom faints on seeing her son kiss a man; a pizza boy thinks "GWM" stands for "guy with money") pretty much unravels whatever charm the characters have. Scotti is a handsome natural whose screen presence helps the audience get through the shenanigans, but only Craig Chester, in the role of Barrile's hip, take-action friend, gives a performance out-there enough to enliven the flat, tired script.—B.D. (Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

Love Serenade—Two small-town Australian sisters (Miranda Otto and Rebecca Frith) fall for the d.j. who has moved in next door (George Shevtsov), in Shirley Barrett's black comedy. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Men in Black—Barry Sonnenfeld's science-fiction comedy is indolent, confident, and shy of risks. Tommy Lee Jones (very cool) and Will Smith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(speedy and high-spirited) play government agents who spend their days policing the activities of resident aliens; whenever the camera wanders away from them, your attention goes with it. Even Linda Fiorentino, as a horny medical examiner, feels irrelevant to the action.—A.L. (7/7/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Mrs. Brown—You never find out whether the lovers in director John Madden's new movie really are lovers; like most of the people in the film, you have to keep guessing. The tale begins with Queen Victoria (Judi Dench) in mourning for her husband, Albert. She is reassured, and then comforted, by John Brown (Billy Connolly), who had worked for Prince Albert. Over time, the Queen's private secretary (Geoffrey Palmer) and her Prime Minister, Disraeli (Antony Sher), become alarmed by the growing intimacy between monarch and manservant, and by the damage that it is inflicting on the royal reputation. Madden could have set this up as a minor tragedy, but he has the wit, especially in the first half, to play it cool and droll, and he is helped no end by a series of finely gauged performances. Dench is stern but not wholly invulnerable; Connolly offers a portrait of devotion so fierce that it verges on the mad; and Sher is a riot: he has the air of a man who finds the whole affair vastly entertaining. And he's right.—A.L. (8/4/97) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, and Lincoln Square.)

My Best Friend's Wedding—In P. J. Hogan's romantic comedy, a writer (Julia Roberts) learns that her former lover and current best friend (Dermot Mulroney) is engaged to be married; she suddenly realizes that she's in love with him and resolves to sabotage the nuptials by any means necessary. For the first hour or so, Roberts's enthusiastic, sexy clowning energizes the picture, but then the filmmakers spoil our enjoyment: they allow dull good sense to triumph over their star's outsized appeal. Also with Cameron Diaz and Rupert Everett.—T.R. (6/16/97) (Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Village East Cinemas.)

Nothing to Lose—This buddy comedy, starring Martin Lawrence and Tim Robbins, was written and directed by Steve Oedekerk, who also wrote and directed "Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls." Once again he gets some real comic brilliance out of his actors, but he can't seem to find a rhythm to sustain a film. Here he throws Lawrence and Robbins together in an unfortunate odd-couple-on-the-run story, then slows down the wacky road adventure with a platitudinous racial subplot. Still, the two actors' chemistry is explosive. Robbins shows some surprisingly physical comic grace, but it's Lawrence's show—his frisky body language and his punchy, dynamic riffs are sensational.—B.D. (84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

187—A high-school teacher (Samuel L. Jackson) has to come to terms with a weak administration and a violent student body, in a drama written by Scott Yagemann and directed by Kevin Reynolds. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Picture Perfect—A comedy about an advertising executive (Jennifer Aniston) who fakes a romance in order to facilitate her rise in the agency she works for. With Jay Mohr, Olympia Dukakis, Illeana Douglas, and Kevin Bacon. Directed by Glenn Gordon Caron. (Art Greenwich Twin, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th St. East.)

The Pillow Book—A drama written and directed by Peter Greenaway, centering on a woman obsessed with having calligraphic messages inscribed on her body. With Vivian Wu, Yoshi Oida, and Ewan McGregor. In Japanese and English. (Angelika Film Center.)

Shall We Dance?—A middle-aged Japanese businessman (Koji Yakusho) sees a young woman standing at a high window; in an act of admirable folly, he tracks her down and finds that she is a dance teacher. He therefore learns to dance—initially in order to be near her, and then, more surprisingly, because he starts to enjoy himself. Masayuki Suo has written and directed a comedy that exerts a cool and slightly mysterious charm. In Japanese.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 72nd Street East.)

Spawn—A murdered government agent (Michael Jai White) makes a deal with the devil which allows him to return from the grave, in a thriller based on Todd McFarlane's comic-book series. With Nicol Williamson, John Leguizamo, and Martin Sheen. Directed by Mark Dippé. (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

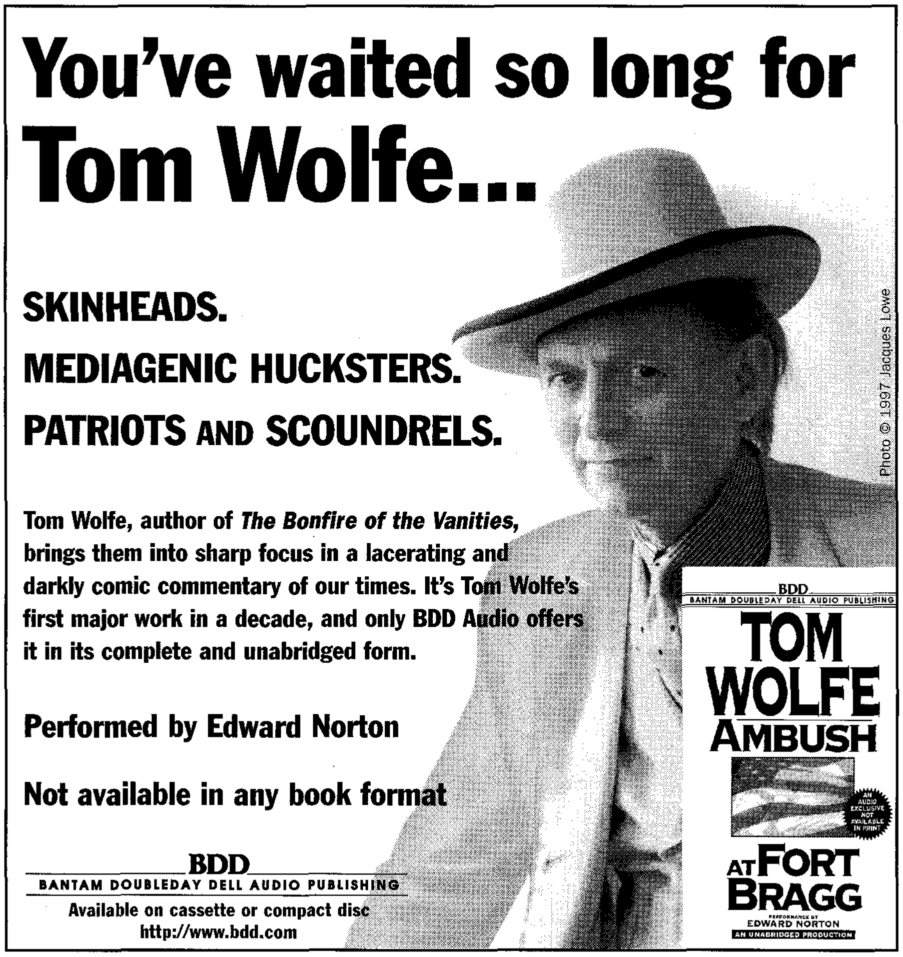
Star Maps—This dysfunctional-family melodrama—a first feature by writer-director Miguel Arteta—tells the story of a young Angeleno, Carlos (Douglas Spain), whose father, Pepe (Efrain Figueroa), recruits him for the family business: prostitution. Pepe justifies his actions with a truly perverse variant of the "Life is hard, nobody gives you anything for nothing" spiel: he's a monstrous exponent of "tough love." As the picture goes along his behavior just gets worse and worse, and the malevolence finally becomes monotonous. The character was probably intended as a grotesque parody of a certain kind of overbearing patriarch, but the metaphor of a father pimping for his own son is too outré to have much resonance. The story plays as an unusually sad and ugly case study—one of those squalid domestic tragedies you hear about from Sally Jessy Raphael or Jenny Jones. Also with Kandeyce Jordan, Lysa Flores, and Martha Velez.—T.R. (7/28/97) (Angelika Film Center and 62nd & Broadway.)

Temptress Moon—Chen Kaige's gorgeous, insanely portentous allegory of Chinese decadence follows three characters through the first half of this century: an opium-addicted heiress (Gong Li); her brother-in-law (Leslie Cheung), who wanted to be a scholar but has wound up a gigolo and a con man; and a distant cousin (Kevin Lin), who becomes her servant and then patiently, cunningly works his way into power. Once in a while Chen achieves the visual intensity of a great silent film; otherwise, it's a festival of kitsch. In Mandarin.—S.K. (Cinema II.)

Ulee's Gold—In Ulee Jackson, a widowed beekeeper living in the Florida panhandle, Peter Fonda has a role that makes virtues of his expressive limitations. The movie, written and directed by Victor Nunez, is designed to draw this lonely, quietly embittered man out of his emotional hibernation, and for once Fonda's very deliberate style feels appropriate: there's pain in it, and fear, and an awful kind of resignation. Also with Patricia Richardson.—T.R. (6/16/97) (Eastside Playhouse, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly. . . . ¶ Regency; through Aug. 7.)

When the Cat's Away—A timid girl returns from a short holiday to find that her cat has disappeared. As she canvasses her Paris neighborhood, she meets a number of people who help her break out of her solitude and enjoy the promise of her surroundings. At the start Cédric Klapisch's movie seems merely lightweight, but in time it begins to flutter like a butterfly, and it lands just as delicately. In French.—B.D. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

The Winner—A big, lumbering innocent (Vincent D'Onofrio) hits a winning streak in Las Vegas, and a cabaret singer (Rebecca DeMornay), a crazy thief (Frank Whaley), and a mob boss (Delroy Lindo) all set out, in their various ways, to play him for a sucker. The director, Alex Cox, brings his usual spiky energy to this bleak comedy, and he makes the Vegas locales look as strange and deserted as outposts on



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Mars. But the script, adapted by Wendy Riss from her play "A Darker Purpose," is an insubstantial rehash of decadent fifties noir. Except for Billy Bob Thornton, who brings a surprisingly low-key brilliance to his role as the singer's desperate boyfriend, the fresh, eager young actors look like fresh, eager young actors—not like people seeking a last chance from life.—S.K. (Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

ALSO PLAYING

ANACONDA (reviewed in our issue of 4/21/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BREAKDOWN:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **CON AIR** (6/9/97): Guild and Manhattan Twin. . . . **DAY FOR NIGHT:** Paris. . . . **THE DAYTRIPPERS** (3/24/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE ENGLISH PATIENT** (11/25/96): 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **THE FIFTH ELEMENT:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LIAR LIAR** (3/31/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LIFE APART:** Quad Cinema. . . . **THE LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK** (6/2/97): Ziegfeld. . . . **OPERATION CONDOR:** Manhattan Twin and Village East Cinemas. . . . **OUT TO SEA:** National Twin. . . . **A SIMPLE WISH:** National Twin. . . . **SPEED 2: CRUISE CONTROL** (7/7/97): Criterion Center. . . . **VOLCANO:** Worldwide Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Narrow Margin (1952)—Richard Fleischer directed this ingenious little sleeper set on a train. It's about a gangster's widow (Marie Windsor) on her reluctant way from Chicago to Los Angeles to testify before a grand jury. The gimmick is that she's being stalked by two mobsters, but they don't know what she looks like. This isn't a first-rate thriller; it's rather drab. Yet the train ride and that gimmick help to provide suspense, and a lot of people remember the movie fondly. (It was made for $188,000.)—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Aug. 9-10.)

The Phenix City Story (1955)—The ace B director Phil Karlson gives the vice-ridden little-city Alabama milieu a skin-crawling seediness, and the sleaze czar played by the saggy-bodied Edward Andrews moves through it with bewildering confidence, like a tyrannosaurus who can somehow maneuver in a tar pit. Based on actual events that led to the assassination of a reform candidate for attorney general, Albert Patterson (played by John McIntire), this volatile, point-ramming muckraker of a movie erratically conflates Hollywood professionals like Richard Kiley (as Patterson's son, John) with actual locations and real people. Yet its lived-in aura of corruption can't be shaken off, and its depictions of singular atrocities—like thugs kidnapping and murdering a black girl in broad daylight—haven't lost their intense horror.—M.S. (Film Forum 2, Aug. 7-8.)

At the American Museum of the Moving Image, Bramwell Fletcher and Anna May Wong in "Daughter of the Dragon."

PHOTOFEST

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2 and 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** Aug. 6: "Who Killed Teddy Bear?" (1965, Joseph Cates) and "Screaming Mimi" (1958, Gerd Oswald). . . . Aug. 7-8: "Tight Spot" (1955, Phil Karlson) and "The Phenix City Story" (†). . . . Aug. 9-10: "The Narrow Margin" (†) and "Armored Car Robbery" (1950, Richard Fleischer). . . . Aug. 11: "Suds" (1920, Jack Dillon; silent) and "Kiki" (1931, Samuel Taylor), both with Mary Pickford. . . . Aug. 12: "I Married a Monster from Outer Space" (1958, Gene Fowler, Jr.) and "Earth vs. the Flying Saucers" (1956, Fred F. Sears). . . . **THEATRE 3:** "Contempt" (1963, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films written (alone or with others) by their directors. Aug. 7 at 2:30 and Aug. 8 at 8:15: "Citizen Kane" (1941, Orson Welles). . . . Aug. 7 at 6 and Aug. 8 at 2:30: "The Killing" (1956, Stanley Kubrick). . . . Aug. 8 at 6 and Aug. 9 at 12:30: "Pather Panchali" (1955, Satyajit Ray; in Bengali). . . . Aug. 9 at 3 and Aug. 11 at 6: "Blazing Saddles" (1974, Mel Brooks). . . . Aug. 9 at 5 and Aug. 11 at 2:30: "Children" (1974, Terence Davies) and "The Children's Hour" (1969, Arturo Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish). . . . Aug. 10 at 1: "Comrades" (1969, Marin Karmitz; in French). . . . Aug. 10 at 3 and Aug. 12 at 6: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French). . . . Aug. 10 at 5 and Aug. 12 at 2:30: "Fahrenheit 451" (1966, Truffaut).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Two silent films starring Sessue Hayakawa. Aug. 9 at 2: "Dragon Painter" (1919, William Worthington). . . . Aug. 9 at 4: "The Secret Game" (1917, William De Mille). . . . ¶ Aug. 9 at 6: "Daughter of the Dragon" (1931, Lloyd Corrigan), with Hayakawa and Anna May Wong. . . . ¶ Two films starring Wong. Aug. 10 at 2: "The Toll of the Sea" (1922, Chester M. Franklin; silent). . . . Aug. 10 at 4: "The Daughter of Shanghai" (1937, Robert Florey).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Aug. 21: A program of recent films from Latin America. . . . ¶ Aug. 9-10 at 2: "Nuns on the Run" (1990, Jonathan Lynn).

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes and coming attractions. The feature on Aug. 11 will be "Vertigo" (1958, Alfred Hitchcock). (Rain date is the following night.)

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Aug. 6-7 at 6 and 8, Aug. 8 at 6, Aug. 9-10 at 2, and Aug. 11-12 at 6: "Lisbon Story" (1995, Wim Wenders). . . . ¶ Aug. 6-7 at 10: "Raging Bull" (1980, Martin Scorsese). . . . ¶ A program of films by, or about, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian, with English subtitles. Aug. 8 at 8 and 10; Aug. 9-10 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30; and Aug. 11-12 at 6: "The Ashes of Pasolini" (1997, Pasquale Misuraca), a documentary. . . . Aug. 11-12 at 8: "Accattone" (1961) and "Mamma Roma" (1962).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Aug. 10 at 7, the feature will be "Family Plot" (1976, Alfred Hitchcock).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 12 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "The Last Métro" (1980, François Truffaut; in French).

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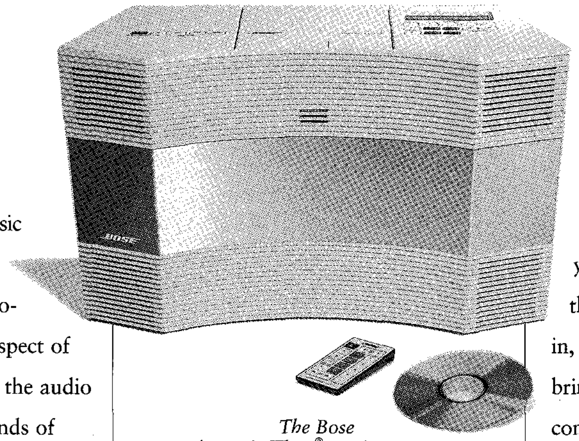

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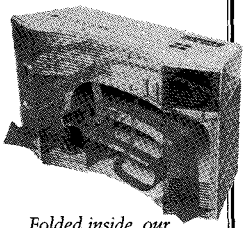

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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

DEPT. OF UTTER CONFUSION

Manhattan braces itself for a new neurosis: area-code envy.

The sense of attachment human beings develop toward their area codes is one of the least understood phenomena in twentieth-century life. If everyone was told to change the first three digits of his or her Social Security number, the emotional temperature of the country would probably rise not even one degree. But the suggestion that sometime in the future half the people in a particular place might have to have a different area code sends a tremor of dread through the deepest part of the regional soul. "I know it's wrong to feel this way," people say to themselves, "but, if there has to be another area code, please, God, let it be assigned to the other guy."

In New York City, such a future is now at hand. Hearings have just been conducted to determine the manner in which a new area code for Manhattan will be imposed on an anxious and resentful public. Since 1995, sixty-two new area codes have been introduced around the country, a consequence of the fact that not just homes and offices but cars, fax machines, computers, pagers, and people walking down the street now have their own phone numbers. In Manhattan, the question is whether the new area code will be administered geographically—that is, by dividing the borough at Twenty-third Street—or by a process known as "overlay," whereby every new number is assigned the new area code, which is 646.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

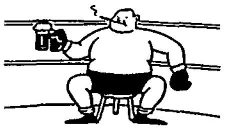
646 is a nice number, a balanced number, a number easy to remember and, no doubt, to dial. But it is not 212. 212 is the aristocrat of area codes, a number bestowed on New York City, back in the era of the rotary phone, because it was the fastest to dial. There was nothing accidental about those original area codes. They reflected the considered judgment of persons highly placed in the telecommunications industry. They had content; they told a story. Alaska, for example, was assigned 907, digits suggesting that people with business in such a place were probably the sort of people who were not rushed for time. Touch-Tone dialling has levelled the calling field, but an aura of privilege still clings to the area codes with the low numbers, or with 1 or 0 as the middle digit—numbers that came over, as it were, on the technological Mayflower. 646 has "nouveau" written all over it.

Still, Area Code Attachment is a peculiar condition. It probably represents the difficulty people have acquiring status symbols in a democratic society. It belongs to the "good seats" syndrome—when you say, "So how was the ball game?" (or play or opera or beauty pageant), the first thing the other person says is "We had *really good* seats." The day is not far off when you will ask people how they like their new neighborhood, and the first thing they'll tell you is "We have a really good area code."

—Louis Menand

THE SPORTING SCENE

Larry Holmes tries a comeback in a sport on the ropes.



Like epic poetry, boxing is a dead art. In both cases, there are modern practitioners, even interesting ones—James Merrill and Vikram Seth made passes at the epic; Mike Tyson had his moment a decade ago—but in both cases the era is one not of bronze but of lead. It is only in such a fallen age that, in the wake of the great Tyson ear-chomping disaster, the art of boxing would try to redeem itself with the spectacle of Larry Holmes, age (and waist) forty-seven, versus a young slip of a fellow named Maurice. Last week's fight took place not in Madison Square Garden but in its miniature annex, the venue for such parental jungle missions as "Sesame Street Live."

In his time, Holmes was a distinguished champion, just one tier below the empyrean once occupied by his old sparring partner Muhammad Ali. Above the shoulders, Holmes looks much the same, except that he now lacks the sense to stay home. His head is tapered like a rocket shell, making him, at one time anyway, hard to hit. He entered the arena to the sounds of "Ain't No Stopping Us Now," a tune as foreign to the young as "*E lucevan le stelle.*" Once inside the ring, Holmes kept his satin robe on for as long as possible, but, like any middle-aged man facing the terrible reckoning of the day at the beach, he soon had to face facts and disrobe. It was instantly apparent that he had been training on doughnuts and naps. Covering the ruins of his bulky musculature was the sort of thick coating of insulation traditionally worn by nineteenth-century bankers and modern television repairmen. He was very fat. The promoters were hoping that Holmes would triumph and then go on to a big-money fight against the other hulking geriatric of the sport, George Foreman, and so they selected an opponent rather the way royal gamekeepers used to select a particularly lame deer for the king's afternoon hunt. Maurice—Maurice Harris, of Newark—is twenty-one and, coming into the fight, boasted a "winning record" most narrowly defined: nine wins, eight losses, and two draws.

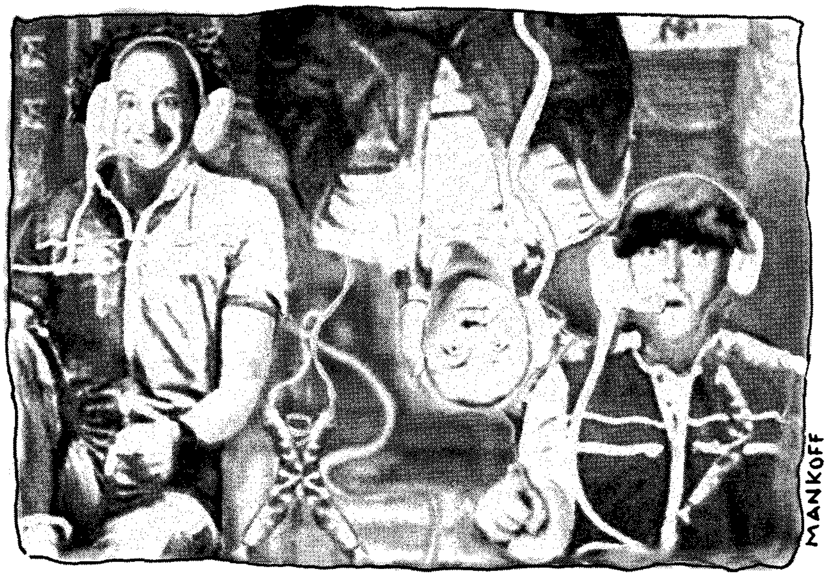
From the opening bell onward, Maurice discovered that the old man was very old indeed, and gained confidence. Every time he snapped a jab into Holmes's face, the Holmes family, seated at ringside, would wince as one.

"C'mon, Daddy! Double up!"

Daddy could not double up. He could not have beaten Maurice if he had been handed a baseball bat. The fight went the distance, ten rounds, and one truly feared that Holmes would end up with an attack of angina. His face was a puffy bruise. He couldn't have won more than three rounds. But boxing being boxing, of course, the judges awarded him the fight.

"I wish Daddy would stop," Holmes's daughter, Kandie, said as the family filed toward the locker rooms. The Champ was at his end, and so, too, it seemed, was boxing, though both promised to go on and on.

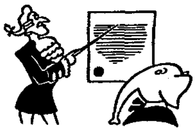
—DAVID REMNICK



MORE TROUBLE ABOARD THE MIR

WIND ON CAPITOL HILL

What passes for a lunchtime tryst in the nation's most sexless metropolis.



NOT since Jesse Helms took on Robert Mapplethorpe, in 1989, has Washington, D.C., seen pictures like these. Actually, not even then. The main attraction at a free lecture called "Sex, Lunch and Overhead Slides," held the other day in the basement of the Capitol, was a series of blown-up images depicting the ravages of sexually transmitted diseases. The mostly female audience of Capitol Hill staffers, who sat in folding chairs with their legs tightly crossed, found it hard to finish their sandwiches.

That was the point. Sex educators have a term for it: scared chaste. The slides accompanied a public teach-in on the "new generation" of sexually transmitted diseases, sponsored by the antifeminist Independent Women's Forum, whose members have included the pundit and right-wing poster girl Laura Ingraham, Mrs. Phil Gramm, and Lisa Schiffren, who wrote Dan Quayle's "Murphy Brown" speech. Representative Tom Coburn, a forty-nine-year-old family physician from Muskogee, Oklahoma, provided detailed narration for the even more detailed slides.

"This weekend, I operated on a woman for an ectopic pregnancy," Coburn, a founder of the Congressional Family Caucus, began. "She had an ectopic pregnancy because she had a previous infection with one of the organisms I'm going to tell you about, which has affected her fertility."

The Congressman knew what he was doing: infertility has become a threat more potent than death in getting people to change their sexual behavior. "We have an epidemic in this country—a sexually-transmitted-disease epidemic," he said. "But you don't hear much about it. It's not a typical lunchtime topic." There is, of course, a reason for this.

According to a pamphlet called "National Guidelines for Sexuality and Character Education," which was available on the way in, "Warning young people about the risks of sex outside of marriage will no more scare them away from healthy sex (in marriage) than telling them about automobile accidents will scare them away from driving."

Not for lack of trying. The Congressman's slides included "penises (ulcerated and chancroid)," "the precancerous cervix" (*Slide-projector click. Gasp*), and "virally infected vulvas." Slides containing basic facts about syphilis and H.I.V. had a skull and crossbones in the background.

Though the queasy audience didn't linger when Coburn finished, he had attracted a standing-room crowd. Evidence, perhaps, of Washington's apparently insatiable need to feel O.K. about not having sex.

—RACHEL GORLIN

AT THE MUSEUMS

The Met has just acquired the "Mona Lisa" of China. But is it a fake?

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

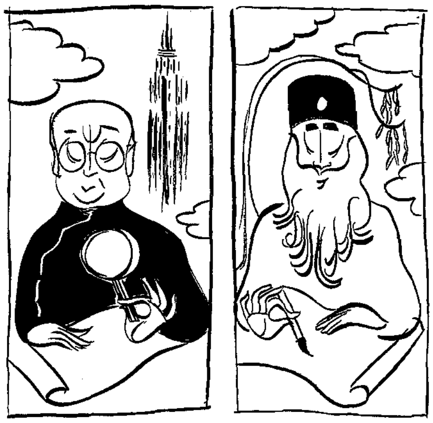
EARLIER this summer, the front page of the *Times* featured a large photograph of a Chinese hanging scroll entitled "The Riverbank," one of eleven paintings recently given to the Metropolitan Museum from the collection of a ninety-year-old connoisseur named C. C. Wang. The *Times* described "The Riverbank"—now on display at the entrance of the museum's newly renovated Chinese-painting galleries—as a tenth-century work by the early master Dong Yuan, and declared it one of the "most important monumental landscape paintings in the world." C. C. Wang likens "The Riverbank" to the "Mona Lisa," and Maxwell Hearn, a curator in the Met's Department of Asian Art, compares Dong Yuan's role in art history to that of Giotto or Leonardo. But that's not how James Cahill, a leading Chinese-art expert, views the acquisition. He believes that the painting is a modern forgery, possibly executed by the notorious painter, forger, and collector Chang Ta-chien, who sold it to Wang in 1956. Cahill, an art historian at Berkeley, says, "I can't accept this as a tenth-century painting. It's simply not plausible in terms of the fuzzy brushwork, the structural incoherence, and the unreadability."

C. C. Wang has long been a controversial figure in the art world. A descendant of the Ming-dynasty high-court official Wang Ao (1450-1524), he is himself a distinguished painter and scholar of Chinese brushwork and seals. But he also serves both as a dealer and as an authenticator (he has been a paid adviser to Sotheby's and a consultant to Christie's), which has raised questions about conflicts of interest. Scholars have been bickering over "The Riverbank" for years. Hearn, the Met curator, believes the scroll is "the best example of Dong Yuan's style to survive," because it "compares well" with other tenth-century works.

The debate raises some puzzling issues unique to the esoteric world of Chinese-painting studies. In China, connoisseurs and collectors have traditionally acquired their expertise by copying ancient masterworks, trying to absorb what the Chinese revere as "the spirit of antiquity." Forgery is a time-honored art, a high aesthetic game. As Wen C. Fong, the chairman of the Met's Department of Asian Art, notes in an essay on forgery, "between the . . . expert authenticator . . . and the expert forger there has always been a long tradition of mutual indebtedness." A practical consequence of this tradition is that the Chinese-painting market is littered with high-quality fakes.

WANG has been accused of peddling forgeries throughout his career. In 1955, for example, he exchanged a group of scrolls with the New York dealer Walter Hochstadter, who later decided that one of those he had received was a fake. The Chinese call this trading pearls for fish eyes. In an ensuing court case, an Italian-American judge struggled to keep the parties' names straight and made Chinese-laundry jokes from the bench. Hochstadter lost the case, as well as the scrolls he had traded to Wang.

Wang's reputation has been fuelled by his long friendship with the late Chang Ta-chien, whose stature as China's preëminent modern painter was shadowed by his other distinction as its most successful forger. Like C. C. Wang, Chang Ta-chien left the mainland in 1949, taking with him a trove of early scrolls (the Met's prized "Riverbank" among them), a mixture of fake and genuine works which still confounds experts. C. C. Wang became one of the main Chinese authorities on whom Western scholars relied to untangle Chang's forgeries. But because C. C. Wang also bought scrolls from Chang Ta-chien for his own collection, his financial interest in the Chinese-art market made the task of separating pearls from fish eyes even murkier. Indeed, the Met has bought sixty paintings from Wang, several of which scholars have suspected as Chang Ta-chien fakes.

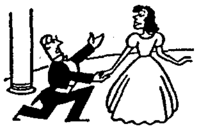

C. C. Wang *Chang Ta-chien*

James Cahill's doubts about "The Riverbank" first surfaced in 1980, when, in his "Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings," he asked, "Important early work? or modern fabrication?" Discussing the scroll recently, Cahill said, "There are all kinds of inconsistencies." He cited a winding river that turns into a road, obscured peaks, and spongy landforms as telltale signs of a Chang Ta-chien forgery. (One such fake, which in 1957 Chang Ta-chien sold as a tenth-century landscape to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, is now on display there as a modern copy.)

The guessing game about "The Riverbank" and the tangle of interest and influence surrounding C. C. Wang's collection are likely to continue. In September, forty more ancient masterworks from his collection will be auctioned at Sotheby's, where the resident Chinese-painting expert is Wang's grandson. —CARL NAGIN

THE BOARDS

In New York, it's the summer of Comden and Green.



IF you get Betty Comden's answering machine these days, the message ends with her singing "New York, New York, it's a helluva town." "A lot of people continue with the next line," she says. Comden, who is in her eighties, wrote those lines with her collaborator of fifty years, Adolph Green; the words were actually scrawled on the stage floor of Sag Harbor's Bay Street Theatre, where "Make Someone Happy," the story of their musical partnership—conceived, co-written, and directed by Green's wife, the actress Phyllis Newman—was entertaining residents earlier this summer. The night I saw the show, Comden and Green rolled into Sag Harbor's American Hotel about forty minutes before curtain, straight from a meeting about George C. Wolfe's brand-new Central Park revival of "On the Town," for which they wrote the book and lyrics to Leonard Bernstein's music. "I just think that being right in the center of the city and seeing the background of not only the Park but the buildings will be an extra-ordinary experience," Comden said. She was full of Broadway drollery. "I've been brooding over Peter Stone's billing for 'Titanic,' " she said, peering over her black-rimmed eyeglasses. " 'Story and book.' I know the story—the ship went down."

In "Make Someone Happy," Comden and Green are incarnated by three sets of actors, each representing different phases of their collaboration. Comden said that she found seeing herself onstage a little "spooky." "The person up there is a better person than I am," she said. Their working method, as the show depicts it, has Comden tethered to the typewriter and Green as a kind of performing workhorse pacing around the room, whinnying with approval. In fact, Green and Comden meet each day at her West Side apartment and work from around one to five in the afternoon. "But Adolph is not much of a pacer," Comden says. "He's a sitter. He'll jump up occasionally. We're a very sedentary pair. Two people sitting in a room staring at each other."

When the show was over, and the audience had heard many marvellous songs from such shows as "On the Town," "Wonderful Town," "Bells Are Ringing," "Two on the Aisle," and the film "Singin' in the Rain," I asked Comden which song meant the most to her. " 'Some Other Time,' " she said. And then, in the same reedy voice that's on her answering machine, she sang:

> Where has the time all gone to?
> Haven't done half the things we want to.
> Oh, well, we'll catch up some other time.

—JOHN LAHR

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LETTER FROM SILICON VALLEY

THE NETWORKER

John Doerr is revolutionizing the high-tech business, for the second time.

BY JOHN HEILEMANN

LATE in the morning of July 11th, on the trading floor of Morgan Stanley, five stories above Times Square, L. John Doerr was waiting for a sign. Doerr, a partner in the Silicon Valley venture-capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, had flown East for the stock-market début of At Home, an Internet start-up that promises to deliver blazingly fast access to the Net over cable-TV wires. Backed with millions of dollars from Kleiner and from a group of cable companies led by John Malone's Tele-Communications, Inc., armed with technology from Netscape, and monitored closely—jealously—by Bill Gates, At Home was a certifiably big idea. It also happened to be Doerr's idea: a firm that he had helped finance and whose spark of inspiration he had provided, whose C.E.O. he had recruited, and whose name he had coined. (The company also goes by @Home.) Now, as Doerr and a handful of At Home's bosses and boosters hovered anxiously over a blue computer screen, the Nasdaq symbol "ATHM" flashed for the first time, and, with it, the stock's opening price of nearly twenty-five dollars—more than double the offering price, and an amount giving At Home a market value, however fleeting, of almost three billion dollars. With mock solemnity, Doerr announced, "America's capital markets are a national treasure," and everyone burst into a chorus of grateful laughter.

As one of the year's most successful initial public offerings, the At Home I.P.O. is bound to enhance Doerr's estimable stature in Silicon Valley. Since joining Kleiner, seventeen years ago, Doerr has steered tens of millions of dollars in seed capital to scores of firms—including Compaq, Lotus, Sun Microsystems, Intuit, Netscape, and Amazon.com—at the center of the high-tech boom that has driven the stock market to its current improbable heights. Between 1980 and 1990, Silicon Valley was the site of what Doerr calls "the largest legal creation of wealth in the history of the planet" as the personal-computer industry's new firms grew from next to nothing to a hundred billion dollars in both revenues and market value. Thanks in large part to Doerr, companies backed by Kleiner accounted for fully a third of those totals.

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Venture capitalists have long bankrolled start-ups, but Doerr is after something grander.

PHILIP BURKE

In Silicon Valley, venture capitalists have long played a crucial role in bankrolling start-ups, but Doerr is after something grander. He is often characterized as a stealthy challenger to Bill Gates—as the ringleader of a coalition of Silicon Valley firms that are out to thwart Microsoft's quest for global hegemony. But even this interpretation may understate the scale of Doerr's ambitions. As Doerr explains it, what he and his nine partners at Kleiner are trying to do is "swing for the fences," their aim being to build not merely "new companies but whole new industries."

In the eighties, Doerr and Kleiner did just that, by playing midwife to the personal-computer revolution, and now they are doing it again, for the industry being spawned by the Internet—an industry that Doerr believes will be even bigger than P.C.s have been. Whether or not that proves to be true, Internet fever has already thrown Silicon Valley into a sort of hyperdrive Renaissance—a frantic, prosperous, paranoid time, in which the only constant element is upheaval. Flush with cash from venture capitalists and from a stock market infatuated with high-tech I.P.O.s, the Valley is awash in Internet schemes: from on-line retailing to on-line publishing; from perfecting search engines so that people can find items on the Net to developing "push technologies" so that the items will find the people; from getting the Web onto TV to designing stripped-down "network computers" that may challenge the reign of the P.C. *The Net changes everything* is the mantra of the moment, and L. John Doerr is leading the chant. "Silicon Valley isn't about silicon anymore," he says. "It's about networking."

Which seems appropriate, since Doerr's own power has less to do with being a financier than with being a networker—a matchmaker, or, as he puts it, "a glorified recruiter." Today, in what he calls Silicon Valley's "post-garage stage," the scarce resource is no longer money or ideas but talent—technical talent, management talent—and no one is better connected to talent than Doerr. How seriously he takes the business of staying connected is indicated by one of his chief strategies, which he calls the Kleiner *keiretsu.* In Japan, a *keiretsu* is a network of firms with interlocking directorships, linked by a central bank. Doerr uses the term to refer to a web of relationships among companies backed by Kleiner. To skeptics, the *keiretsu* seems to be a slick conceit, but Doerr has turned it into a competitive advantage, by using the Kleiner network tirelessly to scout the industry's most skillful managers and technical wizards. "The Valley is full of money right now, and John's is no better than anyone else's," Marc Andreessen, Netscape's twenty-six-year-old software guru and co-founder, told me. "There's smart money, dumb money, corporate money, Japanese money, pension-fund money. If you have a decent idea, getting funded isn't that hard." What makes Doerr so successful, Andreessen said, is his acumen in attracting "superstar" engineers and executives.

In 1994, Andreessen and his partner, Jim Clark, the founder of Silicon Graphics, turned to Doerr for help in getting their new venture off the ground. Because Clark felt that he'd been burned by the venture capitalists who had financed Silicon Graphics, and because he believed that Doerr had stolen a potential partner away from him some years earlier, he was wary. "I think of these guys as velociraptors," he told me over lunch at a ragtag Mexican restaurant in Menlo Park. Yet Clark had no choice. Since teaming up with Andreessen, he had plowed three million dollars of his own money into Netscape, and the firm was in need of millions more, as well as a serious management team. Two other venture groups balked at the chance to fund Netscape. But Doerr had been turned on to the Web a few months earlier by Bill Joy, who is Sun Microsystems' chief scientist as well as one of Doerr's best friends. Joy told him, "This is so big the only thing to do is dive right in." So Doerr did, striking a deal with Clark, and then proceeding, over the next four months, to help line up four vice-presidents for Netscape and, most critically, to persuade James Barksdale, the well-regarded president of A.T. & T. Wireless Services, to become the new company's C.E.O.

Six months later, Netscape launched an I.P.O. that valued the firm at more than two billion dollars, thus making its senior executives multimillionaires (and Clark a billionaire) and, in effect, giving birth to the Internet industry. At the time, though, its prospects were a bit cloudier—or, as Clark put it, "people kept telling us we were nuts." When I asked Clark why, under the circumstances, a sober fellow like Barksdale had signed on, he replied, "Bark was just infatuated with the whole aura of John Doerr."

DOERR'S aura seems to be that of a highly caffeinated Clark Kent. A small, sinewy man with plastic-framed glasses and a toothy grin, Doerr, who is forty-six, is invariably all wound up. He speaks in a rapid-fire baritone, and even when he is silent his legs jig and his feet tap and his fingers rake his blond hair, turning his head into a collection of cowlicks. He drives himself around, unsteadily, in a late-model white minivan, and he appears to own exactly three neckties. For a man of means, he has simple tastes, and a wry, self-effacing sense of humor.

He is also, of course, wired to the hilt. On his belt he wears a tiny cell phone and a two-way pager, which are forever buzzing, and because his PowerBooks are so unreliable he often lugs two of them with him at a time. Indeed, Doerr struggles constantly with his gear; his frustration with all manner of handheld computers has caused him to abandon them entirely in favor of plain white notepads. "They recognize my handwriting, they fit in my shirt pocket, and the batteries never wear out," he says. "Whitebooks.com."

Most mornings, Doerr rises around dawn to swim laps at whichever of his homes he happens to be staying in. (He and his wife, Ann, a former software engineer, and their two adopted daughters are moving from a row house in San Francisco to a modest place in Woodside, in the Valley, and they have a summer house in Aspen.) His days are filled with a procession of board meetings, phone calls, vain attempts to cope with endless E-mails, trips to industry conferences to engage in what he calls "extreme networking," and the occasional breakfast with a hopeful entrepreneur at Buck's, a Western-kitsch diner in Woodside that serves as the Valley's Four Seasons. So manic is Doerr's pace that at the end of one year in the eighties he looked back and found he "had no idea what had happened—it was all a great big blur." Ever since, he has carried a camera with him, and he tries to shoot a picture each day, to serve as a visual diary. Blown-up versions of his favorite snapshots, all of them of his family, adorn the walls of his office in Kleiner's headquarters, an airy, redwood-beamed, chalet-style building on Sand Hill Road, in Menlo Park.

Doerr's intensity has been apparent throughout his life, as have the other qualities that have marked his professional career: technical savvy, gregariousness, and an acute gift for salesmanship. Doerr grew up Catholic in St. Louis, the son of a mechanical engineer who started a company that made pumps for sulfuric

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☐ **Inactive Lifestyle:**
1 pt. I rarely exercise or do anything physically demanding

☐ **Weight:**
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☐ **Smoking:**
1 pt. I'm a smoker

☐ **Diabetic:**
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2 pts. Female Diabetic

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1 pt. 240 to 315 mg/dL
2 pts. More than 315 mg/dL

☐ **HDL Level (good cholesterol):**
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2 pts. Under 30 mg/dL
-1 pt. Over 60 mg/dL

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PRAVACHOL®

Pravastatin Sodium Tablets

CONTRAINDICATIONS: Hypersensitivity to any component of this medication. Active liver disease or unexplained, persistent elevations in liver function tests (see **WARNINGS**). *Pregnancy and lactation.* Atherosclerosis is a chronic process and discontinuation of lipid-lowering drugs during pregnancy should have little impact on the outcome of long-term therapy of *primary hypercholesterolemia. Cholesterol and other products of cholesterol biosynthesis are essential components for fetal* development (including synthesis of steroids and cell membranes). Since HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors decrease cholesterol synthesis and possibly the synthesis of other biologically active substances derived from cholesterol, they may cause fetal harm when administered to pregnant women. Therefore, HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are contraindicated during pregnancy and in nursing mothers. **Pravastatin should be administered to women of childbearing age only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards.** If the patient becomes pregnant while taking this class of drug, therapy should be discontinued and the patient apprised of the potential hazard to the fetus.

WARNINGS: Liver Enzymes: HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors, like some other lipid-lowering therapies, have been associated with biochemical abnormalities of liver function. Increases of serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values to more than 3 times the upper limit of normal occurring on 2 or more (not necessarily sequential) occasions have been reported in 1.3% of patients treated with pravastatin in the US over an average period of 18 months. These abnormalities were not associated with cholestasis and did not appear to be related to treatment duration. In those patients in whom these abnormalities were believed to be related to pravastatin and who were discontinued from therapy, the transaminase levels usually fell slowly to pretreatment levels. These biochemical findings are usually asymptomatic although worldwide experience indicates that anorexia, weakness, and/or abdominal pain may also be present in rare patients. In the largest long-term placebo-controlled clinical trial with pravastatin (Pravastatin Primary Prevention Study; See **Clinical Pharmacology**), the overall incidence of AST and/or ALT elevations to greater than three times the upper limit of normal was 1.05% in the pravastatin group as compared to 0.75% in the placebo group. One (0.03%) pravastatin-treated patient and 2 (0.06%) placebo-treated patients were discontinued because of transaminase elevations. Of the patients with normal liver function at week 12, three of 2875 treated with pravastatin (0.10%) and one of the 2919 placebo patients (0.03%) had elevations of AST greater than three times the upper limit of normal on two consecutive measurements and/or discontinued due to elevations in transaminase levels during the 4.8 years (median treatment) of the study. **It is recommended that liver function tests be performed prior to and at 12 weeks following *initiation of therapy or the elevation of dose.*** *Patients who develop increased transaminase levels or signs and symptoms* of liver disease should be monitored with a second liver function evaluation to confirm the finding and be followed thereafter with frequent liver function tests until the abnormality(ies) return to normal. Should an increase in AST or ALT of three times the upper limit of normal or greater persist, withdrawal of pravastatin therapy is recommended. Active liver disease or unexplained transaminase elevations are contraindications to the use of pravastatin (see **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). Caution should be exercised when pravastatin is administered to patients with a history of liver disease or heavy alcohol ingestion (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Pharmacokinetics/Metabolism**). Such patients should be closely monitored, started at the lower end of the recommended dosing range, and titrated to the desired therapeutic effect. **Skeletal Muscle: Rare cases of rhabdomyolysis with acute renal failure secondary to myoglobinuria have been reported with pravastatin and other drugs in this class.** Uncomplicated myalgia has also been reported in pravastatin-treated patients (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). Myopathy, defined as muscle aching or muscle weakness in conjunction with increases in creatine phosphokinase (CPK) values to greater than 10 times the upper normal limit, was rare (< 0.1%) in pravastatin clinical trials. Myopathy should be considered in any patient with diffuse myalgias, muscle tenderness or weakness, and/or marked elevation of CPK. Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever. **Pravastatin therapy should be discontinued if markedly elevated CPK levels occur or myopathy is diagnosed or suspected. Pravastatin therapy should also be temporarily withheld in any patient experiencing an acute or serious condition predisposing to the development of renal failure secondary to rhabdomyolysis, e.g., sepsis; hypotension; major surgery; trauma; severe metabolic, endocrine, or electrolyte disorders; or uncontrolled epilepsy.** The risk of myopathy during treatment with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor is increased with concurrent therapy with either erythromycin, cyclosporine, niacin, or fibrates. However, neither myopathy nor significant increases in CPK levels have been observed in three reports involving a total of 100 post-transplant patients (24 renal and 76 cardiac) treated for up to two years concurrently with pravastatin 10-40 mg and cyclosporine. Some of these patients also received other concomitant immunosuppressive therapies. In one single-dose study, pravastatin levels were found to be increased in cardiac transplant patients receiving cyclosporine. Further, in clinical trials involving small numbers of patients who were treated concurrently with pravastatin and niacin, there were no reports of myopathy. Also, myopathy was not reported in a trial of combination pravastatin (40 mg/day) and gemfibrozil (1200 mg/day), although 4 of 75 patients on the combination showed marked CPK elevations versus one of 73 patients receiving placebo. There was a trend toward more frequent CPK elevations and patient withdrawals due to musculoskeletal symptoms in the group receiving combined treatment *as compared with the groups receiving placebo, gemfibrozil, or pravastatin monotherapy (see* ***PRECAUTIONS: Drug*** **Interactions**). **The use of fibrates alone may occasionally be associated with myopathy. The combined use of pravastatin and fibrates should be avoided unless the benefit of further alterations in lipid levels is likely to outweigh the increased risk of this drug combination.**

PRECAUTIONS: General: Pravastatin may elevate creatinine phosphokinase and transaminase levels (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). This should be considered in the differential diagnosis of chest pain in a patient on therapy with pravastatin. *Homozygous Familial Hypercholesterolemia.* Pravastatin has not been evaluated in patients with rare homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia. In this group of patients, it has been reported that HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors are less effective because the patients lack functional LDL receptors. *Renal Insufficiency.* A single 20 mg oral dose of pravastatin was administered to 24 patients with varying degrees of renal impairment (as determined by creatinine clearance). No effect was observed on the pharmacokinetics of pravastatin or its 3α-hydroxy isomeric metabolite (SQ 31,906). A small increase was seen *in mean AUC values and half-life (t½) for the inactive enzymatic ring hydroxylation metabolite (SQ 31,945). Given this small* sample size, the dosage administered, and the degree of individual variability, patients with renal impairment who are receiving pravastatin should be closely monitored. **Information for Patients:** Patients should be advised to report promptly unexplained muscle pain, tenderness or weakness, particularly if accompanied by malaise or fever. **Drug Interactions:** *Immunosuppressive Drugs, Gemfibrozil, Niacin (Nicotinic Acid), Erythromycin:* See **WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle**. *Antipyrine:* Since concomitant administration of pravastatin had no effect on the clearance of antipyrine, interactions with other drugs metabolized via the same hepatic cytochrome isozymes are not expected. *Cholestyramine/Colestipol:* Concomitant administration resulted in an approximately 40 to 50% decrease in the mean AUC of pravastatin. However, when pravastatin was administered 1 hour before or 4 hours after cholestyramine or 1 hour before colestipol and a standard meal, there was no clinically significant decrease in bioavailability or therapeutic effect. (See **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION: Concomitant Therapy**.) *Warfarin:* In a study involving 10 healthy male subjects given pravastatin and warfarin concomitantly for 6 days, bioavailability parameters at steady state for pravastatin (parent compound) were not altered. Pravastatin did not alter the plasma protein-binding of warfarin. Concomitant dosing did increase the AUC and Cmax of warfarin but did not produce any changes in its anticoagulant action (i.e., no increase was seen in mean prothrombin time after 6 days of concomitant therapy). However, bleeding and extreme prolongation of prothrombin time has been reported with another drug in this class. Patients receiving warfarin-type anticoagulants should have their prothrombin times closely monitored when pravastatin is initiated or the dosage of pravastatin is changed. *Cimetidine:* The $AUC_{0-12\,hr}$ for pravastatin when given with cimetidine was not significantly different from the AUC *for pravastatin when given alone. A significant difference was observed between the AUC's for pravastatin when given with* cimetidine compared to when administered with antacid. *Digoxin:* In a crossover trial involving 18 healthy male subjects given pravastatin and digoxin concurrently for 9 days, the bioavailability parameters of digoxin were not affected. The AUC of pravastatin tended to increase, but the overall bioavailability of pravastatin plus its metabolites SQ 31,906 and SQ 31,945 was not altered. *Cyclosporine:* Some investigators have measured cyclosporine levels in patients on pravastatin, and to date, these results indicate no clinically meaningful elevations in cyclosporine levels. In one single-dose study, pravastatin levels were found to be increased in cardiac transplant patients receiving cyclosporine. *Gemfibrozil:* In a crossover study in 20 healthy male volunteers given concomitant single doses of pravastatin and gemfibrozil, there was a significant decrease in urinary excretion and protein binding of pravastatin. In addition, there was a significant increase in AUC, Cmax, and Tmax for the pravastatin metabolite SQ 31,906. Combination therapy with pravastatin and gemfibrozil is generally not recommended. In interaction studies with *aspirin, antacids* (1 hour prior to PRAVACHOL), *cimetidine, nicotinic acid,* or *probucol,* no statistically significant *differences in bioavailability were seen when PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) was administered. Other Drugs:* During clinical trials, no noticeable drug interactions were reported when PRAVACHOL was added to: diuretics, antihypertensives, digitalis, ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers, beta-blockers, or nitroglycerin. **Endocrine Function:** HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors interfere with cholesterol synthesis and lower circulating cholesterol levels and, as such, might theoretically blunt adrenal or gonadal steroid hormone production. Results of clinical trials with pravastatin in males and post-menopausal females were inconsistent with regard to possible effects of the drug on basal steroid hormone levels. In a study of 21 males, the mean testosterone response to human chorionic gonadotropin was significantly reduced ($p < 0.004$) after 16 weeks of treatment with 40 mg of pravastatin. However, the percentage of patients showing a $\geq 50\%$ rise in plasma testosterone after human chorionic gonadotropin stimulation did not change significantly after therapy in these patients. The effects of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors on spermatogenesis and fertility have not been studied in adequate numbers of patients. The effects, if any, of pravastatin on the pituitary-gonadal axis in pre-menopausal females are unknown. Patients treated with pravastatin who display clinical evidence of endocrine dysfunction should be evaluated appropriately. Caution should also be exercised if an HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor or other agent used to lower cholesterol levels is administered to patients also receiving other drugs (e.g., ketoconazole, spironolactone, cimetidine) that may diminish the levels or activity of steroid hormones. **CNS Toxicity:** CNS vascular lesions, characterized by perivascular hemorrhage and edema and mononuclear cell infiltration of perivascular spaces, were seen in dogs treated with pravastatin at a dose of 25 mg/kg/day, a dose that produced a plasma drug level about 50 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking 40 mg/day. Similar CNS vascular lesions have been observed with *several other drugs in this class. A chemically similar drug in this class produced optic nerve degeneration (Wallerian* degeneration of retinogeniculate fibers) in clinically normal dogs in a dose-dependent fashion starting at 60 mg/kg/day, a dose that produced mean plasma drug levels about 30 times higher than the mean drug level in humans taking the highest recommended dose (as measured by total enzyme inhibitory activity). This same drug also produced vestibulocochlear Wallerian-like degeneration and retinal ganglion cell chromatolysis in dogs treated for 14 weeks at 180 mg/kg/day, a dose which resulted in a mean plasma drug level similar to that seen with the 60 mg/kg/day dose. **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility:** In a 2-year study in rats fed pravastatin at doses of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg body weight, there was an increased incidence of hepatocellular carcinomas in males at the highest dose ($p < 0.01$). Although rats were given up to 125 times the human dose (HD) on a mg/kg body weight basis, serum drug levels were only 6 to 10 times higher than those measured in humans given 40 mg pravastatin as measured by AUC. The oral administration of 10, 30, or 100 mg/kg (producing plasma drug levels approximately 0.5 to 5.0 times the human drug levels at 40 mg) of pravastatin to mice for 22 months resulted in a statistically significant increase in the incidence of malignant lymphomas in treated females when all treatment groups were pooled and compared to controls ($p < 0.05$). The incidence was not dose-related and male mice were not affected. *A chemically similar drug in this class was administered to mice for 72 weeks at 25, 100, and 400 mg/kg body weight, which* resulted in mean serum drug levels approximately 3, 15, and 33 times higher than the mean human serum drug concentration (as total inhibitory activity) after a 40 mg oral dose. Liver carcinomas were significantly increased in high-dose females and mid- and high-dose males, with a maximum incidence of 90 percent in males. The incidence of adenomas of the liver was significantly increased in mid- and high-dose females. Drug treatment also significantly increased the incidence of lung adenomas in mid- and high-dose males and females. Adenomas of the eye Harderian gland (a gland of the eye of rodents) were significantly higher in high-dose mice than in controls. No evidence of mutagenicity was observed *in vitro*, with or without rat-liver metabolic activation, in the following studies: microbial mutagen tests, using mutant strains of *Salmonella typhimurium* or *Escherichia coli*; a forward mutation assay in L5178Y TK +/- mouse lymphoma cells; a chromosomal aberration test in hamster cells; and a gene conversion assay using *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. In addition, there was no evidence of mutagenicity in either a dominant lethal test in mice or a micronucleus test in mice. In a study in rats, with daily doses up to 500 mg/kg, pravastatin did not produce any adverse effects on fertility or general reproductive performance. However, in a study with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, there was decreased fertility in male rats treated for 34 weeks at 25 mg/kg body weight, although this effect was not observed in a subsequent fertility study when this same dose was administered for 11 weeks (the entire cycle of spermatogenesis, including epididymal maturation). In rats treated with this same reductase inhibitor at 180 mg/kg/day, seminiferous tubule degeneration (necrosis and loss of spermatogenic epithelium) was observed. Although not seen with pravastatin, two similar drugs in this class caused drug-related testicular atrophy, decreased spermatogenesis, spermatocytic degeneration, and giant cell formation in dogs. *The clinical significance of these findings is unclear.* **Pregnancy: Pregnancy Category X.** See **CONTRAINDICATIONS.** Safety in pregnant women has not been established. Pravastatin was not teratogenic in rats at doses up to 1000 mg/kg daily or in rabbits at doses of up to 50 mg/kg daily. These doses resulted in 20x (rabbit) or 240x (rat) the human exposure based on surface area ($mg/meter^2$). However, in studies with another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, skeletal malformations were observed in rats and mice. There has been one report of severe congenital bony deformity, tracheo-esophageal fistula, and anal atresia (Vater association) in a baby born to a woman who took another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor with dextroamphetamine sulfate during the first trimester of pregnancy. PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) should be administered to women of child-bearing potential only when such patients are highly unlikely to conceive and have been informed of the potential hazards. If the woman becomes pregnant while taking PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium), it should be discontinued and the patient advised again as to the potential hazards to the fetus. **Nursing Mothers:** A small amount of pravastatin is excreted in human breast milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing *infants, women taking PRAVACHOL should not nurse (see* **CONTRAINDICATIONS**). ***Pediatric Use:*** *Safety and effectiveness in* individuals less than 18 years old have not been established. Hence, treatment in patients less than 18 years old is not recommended at this time.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: Pravastatin is generally well tolerated; adverse reactions have usually been mild and transient. In 4-month long placebo-controlled trials, 1.7% of pravastatin-treated patients and 1.2% of placebo-treated patients were discontinued from treatment because of adverse experiences attributed to study drug therapy; this difference was not statistically significant. In long-term studies, the most common reasons for discontinuation were asymptomatic serum transaminase increases and mild, non-specific gastrointestinal complaints. During clinical trials the overall incidence of adverse events in the elderly was not different from the incidence observed in younger patients. **Adverse Clinical Events:** All adverse clinical events (regardless of attribution) reported in more than 2% of pravastatin-treated patients in the placebo-controlled trials are identified in the table below; also shown are the percentages of patients in whom these medical events were believed *to be related or possibly related to the drug:*

	All Events		**Events Attributed to Study Drug**	
Body System/Event	**Pravastatin (N = 900) %**	**Placebo (N = 411) %**	**Pravastatin (N = 900) %**	**Placebo (N = 411) %**
Cardiovascular				
Cardiac Chest Pain	4.0	3.4	0.1	0.0
Dermatologic Rash	4.0*	1.1	1.3	0.9
Gastrointestinal				
Nausea/Vomiting	7.3	7.1	2.9	3.4
Diarrhea	6.2	5.6	2.0	1.9
Abdominal Pain	5.4	6.9	2.0	3.9
Constipation	4.0	7.1	2.4	5.1
Flatulence	3.3	3.6	2.7	3.4
Heartburn	2.9	1.9	2.0	0.7
General				
Fatigue	3.8	3.4	1.9	1.0
Chest Pain	3.7	1.9	0.3	0.2
Influenza	2.4*	0.7	0.0	0.0
Musculoskeletal				
Localized Pain	10.0	9.0	1.4	1.5
Myalgia	2.7	1.0	0.6	0.0
Nervous System				
Headache	6.2	3.9	1.7*	0.2
Dizziness	3.3	3.2	1.0	0.5
Renal/Genitourinary				
Urinary Abnormality	2.4	2.9	0.7	1.2
Respiratory				
Common Cold	7.0	6.3	0.0	0.0
Rhinitis	4.0	4.1	0.1	0.0
Cough	2.6	1.7	0.1	0.0

*Statistically significantly different from placebo.

In the Pravastatin Primary Prevention Study (West of Scotland Coronary Prevention Study) (see **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Clinical Studies**) involving 6595 patients treated with PRAVACHOL (pravastatin sodium) (N = 3302) or placebo (n = 3293) the adverse event profile in the pravastatin group was comparable to that of the placebo group over the median 4.8 years of the study. The following effects have been reported with drugs in this class; not all the effects listed below have necessarily been associated with pravastatin therapy: *Skeletal:* myopathy, rhabdomyolysis, arthralgia. *Neurological:* dysfunction of certain cranial nerves (including alteration of taste, impairment of extra-ocular movement, facial paresis), tremor, vertigo, memory loss, paresthesia, peripheral neuropathy, peripheral nerve palsy, anxiety, insomnia, depression. *Hypersensitivity Reactions:* An apparent hypersensitivity syndrome has been reported rarely which has included one or more of the following features: anaphylaxis, angioedema, lupus erythematous-like syndrome, polymyalgia rheumatica, dermatomyositis, vasculitis, purpura, thrombocytopenia, leukopenia, hemolytic anemia, positive ANA, ESR increase, eosinophilia, arthritis, arthralgia, urticaria, asthenia, photosensitivity, fever, chills, flushing, malaise, dyspnea, toxic epidermal necrolysis, erythema multiforme, including Stevens-Johnson syndrome. *Gastrointestinal:* pancreatitis, hepatitis, including chronic active hepatitis, cholestatic jaundice, fatty change in liver, and, rarely, cirrhosis, fulminant hepatic necrosis, and hepatoma; anorexia, vomiting. *Skin:* alopecia, pruritus. A variety of skin changes (e.g., nodules, discoloration, dryness of skin/mucous membranes, changes to hair/nails) have been reported. *Reproductive:* gynecomastia, loss of libido, erectile dysfunction. *Eye:* progression of cataracts (lens opacities), ophthalmoplegia. *Laboratory Abnormalities:* elevated transaminases, alkaline phosphatase, and bilirubin; thyroid function abnormalities. **Laboratory Test Abnormalities:** Increases in serum transaminase (ALT, AST) values and CPK have been observed (see **WARNINGS**). Transient, asymptomatic eosinophilia has been reported. Eosinophil counts usually returned to normal despite continued therapy. Anemia, thrombocytopenia, and leukopenia have been reported with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors. **Concomitant Therapy:** Pravastatin has been administered concurrently with cholestyramine, colestipol, nicotinic acid, probucol and gemfibrozil. Preliminary data suggest that the addition of either probucol or gemfibrozil to therapy with lovastatin or pravastatin is **not** associated with greater reduction in LDL-cholesterol than that achieved with lovastatin or pravastatin alone. No adverse reactions unique to the combination or in addition to those previously reported for each drug alone have been reported. Myopathy and rhabdomyolysis (with or without acute renal failure) have been reported when another HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor was used in combination with immunosuppressive drugs, gemfibrozil, erythromycin, or lipid-*lowering doses of nicotinic acid. Concomitant therapy with HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors and these agents is generally not* recommended. (See **WARNINGS: Skeletal Muscle** and **PRECAUTIONS: Drug Interactions**.)

OVERDOSAGE: To date, there are two reported cases of overdosage with pravastatin, both of which were asymptomatic and not associated with clinical laboratory abnormalities. If an overdose occurs, it should be treated symptomatically and supportive measures should be instituted as required.

CAUTION: Federal (USA) law prohibits dispensing without prescription.

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Bristol-Myers Squibb Company
Princeton, NJ 08543

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acid. He took a bachelor's degree and a master's in electrical engineering at Rice University, got an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School, and then landed a job with Intel. At Intel, Doerr—who had been a debating champion in high school—made a reputation as a brilliant marketer. (Stuck with the assignment of selling software to Midwestern farmers, he closed one deal by throwing in a lawnmower.) When Doerr was offered the job at Kleiner, Andy Grove, Intel's C.E.O., tried to persuade him to turn it down, comparing venture capitalists to real-estate brokers. But Doerr saw Kleiner as a stepping stone on the way to starting his own company. Within a few months, he founded Silicon Compilers, a computer-chip-design firm, without leaving Kleiner. (He later sold it for a hundred and twenty-seven million dollars.)

In his early days at Kleiner, Doerr spent much of his free time hanging around Margaret Jacks Hall, the legendary engineering building at Stanford, where, at the time, Sun, Silicon Graphics, and Cisco Systems—three companies that would one day be among Silicon Valley's most powerful—were being hatched. What he learned there, along with his background at Intel, helped him anticipate the first of the great waves of computer technology that he would ride so adroitly. "If you knew something about microprocessors, you would've had to be a complete idiot not to succeed as a V.C. in the early eighties," he told me. Yet Doerr saw something that more than a few serious technologists didn't see—that P.C.s and workstations would put an end to mainframe computers. In rapid succession, he sponsored Kleiner investments in Lotus, the creator of the spreadsheet program that in many ways made the P.C. industry happen; in Compaq, which would one day be the world's biggest P.C. manufacturer; and in Sun, which would become the world's leading workstation maker and, later, a pioneer in Internet software.

WHEN Doerr arrived at Kleiner, in 1980, the firm was only eight years old but was already earning a reputation as tough, smart, and slightly arrogant. In those days, venture capital was a stately, collegial affair, in which rival firms worked together to fund risky start-ups desperate for cash, which no stolid bank would lend them; in return, the V.C.s demanded a hefty stake in the company and a seat on the board. Today, the basics are the same, but as the financial stakes have risen the V.C.s have become furiously competitive, and they have developed specialties. Kleiner's fortes, Doerr explains, are "bugs and drugs and bits and bytes"—biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, computer hardware, and software. (The firm's most notable investment outside the computer business was in Genentech, the biotech firm that, in the early eighties, helped launch the genomics industry.) Every year, Kleiner receives roughly three thousand business plans, and, according to Doerr, all of them get read. Yet each partner takes on just two or three projects a year, and, tellingly, Doerr can't recall Kleiner ever having invested in one on the basis of an unsolicited plan. "Most of the plans are crazy," Doerr says. "People who want to put up a dome over Los Angeles to keep out the smog. Seriously."

Doerr has developed elaborate formulas for evaluating a proposal's worthiness. "Kleiner's first law," he said one afternoon on a wooden deck behind his office, referring to Eugene Kleiner, a founding partner of the firm, "is to get the risk up front and out of the way early. Doerr's corollary is that risk comes in four parts. There's technical risk: can we split the atom? There's market risk: will the dogs eat the dog food, or the fish jump out of the tank? There's people risk: will the people who founded the company stick around? And there's financing risk: can we get the money?" Market risk, he added, is "the most deadly." He went on, "Why? Because it's way downstream, after you've invested lots of money, at a burn rate of maybe a million dollars a month, then you might find out it's just not going to work." Technical risk is the least worrisome. "We love technical risk—in fact, we *wallow* in it," he said. "Not that we're always right. I often say that training a good venture capitalist is like crashing a few F-16s. It costs about thirty million, straight down the drain." Doerr's priciest crackup was his investment in GO, a firm making pen-operated computers which tanked so spectacularly that it has spawned a book, entitled "Startup" (Doerr: "It should be called 'Screwup' "), which Danny DeVito has optioned for a film.

For a long time, Doerr was obsessed mainly with start-ups like GO which had really cool, if sometimes dodgy, technologies. But recently he has come to see the quality of a firm's management as the central question. "What there is in our business is plenty of plans, plenty of entrepreneurs, and plenty of money," he told me. "What there's a shortage of is great teams." As an example, he cited At Home. Doerr regards At Home's Internet-through-cable technology as a breakthrough, but the company could never have come as far as it has without its C.E.O., Tom Jermoluk, whom Doerr lured away from his job as president of Silicon Graphics after spending months in New York hotel rooms interviewing forty-five other candidates. Doerr's partner William Randolph Hearst III says, "John is the originator in Silicon Valley of the talent theory of money-making, as opposed to the monopoly theory or the brand theory or the brains theory or the money theory. He's the originator of the 'It's the people, stupid' theory."

Doerr's theories have led to a number of costly disasters besides GO—notably Dynabook Technologies, a company that tried to make super-light laptops using a cutting-edge technology that never quite worked. Over the long term, though, Doerr's and Kleiner's records are remarkable. Every year, the firm writes about a hundred million dollars in checks to entrepreneurs—an investment that in this decade has produced returns of more than forty per cent to the university endowments and other big institutions that provide the bulk of Kleiner's funds. "A bit better than passbook rates," Doerr quips. According to Richard Shaffer, who publishes a newsletter and organizes conferences for the venture-capital industry, this level of success has given Kleiner an image "that makes people think they can't fail." He adds, "It's clearly not the case, but there's this notion that if you get John and Kleiner Perkins as an investor you can practically buy your Ferrari now."

Doerr is fully aware that his mystique has become a formidable asset, one that figured in a story that is emblematic of the post-garage era. Three years ago, Jeff Bezos, who was then a thirty-year-old manager at a New York hedge fund, pounded out a methodical analysis of all the possible businesses that would make more sense on-line than in the physical world. Bezos discovered that while the biggest bookstores might carry a hundred and seventy thousand titles, an on-line "store," without the constraints of real estate, could carry millions. Bezos knew he had to move fast. He and his wife set off across the country in their Chevy Blazer, and, as she drove, Bezos tapped out a business plan on a laptop. Halfway through the trip, he decided to set up shop in Seattle, retained an attorney by cell phone, and came up with a name for the company: Amazon.com.

A year later, Amazon was up and running, and Bezos was being besieged by venture capitalists who wanted a piece of the action. "We joked that we were going to have to change our voice-mail system to say, 'If you're a customer, press 'one.' If you're a V.C., press 'two,' " he told me. But Bezos had heard nothing from Doerr, so he invited him up to Seattle. The two hit it off, yet when it came time to talk money Doerr found that Bezos had "breathtaking ambitions for the valuation of the company"—too breathtaking, in Doerr's view. In the competitive bidding against two other V.C.s, Doerr offered eight million dollars for fifteen per cent of the company. His bid turned out to be the lowest, but Bezos took it anyway, and in the next months Doerr helped persuade Scott Cook, the chairman of Intuit, to join him on Amazon's board, and helped recruit two vice-presidents; and this May he assisted Bezos in launching an I.P.O. that valued Amazon at more than half a billion dollars, yielding a paper profit for Kleiner of seventy-two million.

I asked Bezos why he'd chosen Doerr, despite Doerr's low bid. "If we'd thought all this was purely about money, we'd have gone with another firm," Bezos said. "But Kleiner and John are the gravitational center of a huge piece of the Internet world. Being with them is like being on prime real estate."

WHEN Bezos and I spoke, we were on prime real estate in Aspen, where Doerr and his partners were hosting their annual retreat for C.E.O.s and other executives from the information-technology side of the Kleiner *keiretsu*. It was a bright, cheerful weekend in which softball games and mountain-bike rides were mixed with round-table sessions on such topics as the urgent need for more bandwidth—a discussion that inspired one wild-eyed Kleiner partner to take up the cause of an alternative worldwide telephone system—and with quieter conversations among C.E.O.s about the deals they might do together.

In some parts of Silicon Valley, and perhaps in Seattle, too, Kleiner's Aspen retreat might be seen as yet another piece of evidence supporting one of the high-tech world's favorite conspiracy theories: that the Kleiner *keiretsu* is in fact an anti-Microsoft cabal, with Doerr as its presiding genius. An article last year in *Forbes ASAP* by the antic technology writer George Gilder went as far as to portray Doerr as the Valley's David, who was out to topple Bill Gates's Goliath.

Indications that Doerr is pursuing an anti-Microsoft strategy are not especially hard to find. He is on the board of two of Microsoft's fiercest rivals, Netscape and Sun, and last summer he was behind a hundred-million-dollar Kleiner fund to finance start-ups of Internet software companies that use a Sun programming language called Java, which, because it creates programs that can run on virtually all computer operating systems, and not just Windows, is seen as a particular threat to Microsoft. Russ Siegelman, a Kleiner partner who spent seven years working at Microsoft, told me, "There are definitely some senior people at Microsoft who believe that Kleiner is out to use its *keiretsu* to build a stable of companies to compete with them." He added, "I don't think Gates has that view, by the way. Bill's view of venture capitalists is that they're out to make money and they'll do that any way they can." But when I asked Will Hearst, who counts himself a friend of Gates, to describe how the Microsoft chairman views Doerr, he was uncharacteristically coy. "Bill regards John as a very bright guy who's not—well, not a hundred per cent Microsoft-aligned," he said.

Doerr is at pains to dispel such notions. "It's absolutely, positively not true," he says. "It doesn't serve our economic interests to advocate any particular ideology. We need to be agnostic." He points to a

B. Smaller

"They're not dingy, Mother, they're unbleached."

number of Kleiner-backed companies—Compaq not least among them—that are Microsoft allies. As for some of Kleiner's other companies, he argues that "it's the entrepreneurs that are competing with Microsoft, not us." He notes that Microsoft has embraced the Java language, and that last summer he offered Gates the chance to invest in Kleiner's Java Fund "in the hope of dispelling forever this notion that we're competing with them." (Gates passed.) Besides, Doerr says, "only damn fools stand in the way of oncoming trains."

The truth, I think, is somewhat more complicated. Doerr and his allies were far ahead of Gates in grasping the potential of the Internet. Three years ago, when Doerr was first becoming involved with Netscape, Microsoft's chairman was still dismissing the Net as so much hype—a position he continued to hold until mid-1995. For a time, it seemed plausible that the Internet's ascendance would cause Microsoft to stumble, and this plausibility suffused the Valley with a dizzy optimism. "If Bill hadn't adapted to the Internet, Microsoft would be dead," the influential industry observer Esther Dyson says. But Gates did adapt, pulling off one of the more dramatic reversals in recent business history by transforming Microsoft into one of the Internet's dominant players. Today, the Valley's optimism has been replaced by fear as Microsoft's position seems to grow only more powerful and pervasive. As Doerr puts it, "they're like electricity—they're everywhere."

For a sane venture capitalist to try to "get" Microsoft in these circumstances would be, in Richard Shaffer's words, "a stupid, idiot strategy." But the sweep of Gates's and Doerr's respective ambitions makes it inevitable that the two will collide again and again. Sun's Java is rapidly becoming the standard language on the Internet, and executives such as Scott McNealy, the C.E.O. of Sun, and Larry Ellison, the C.E.O. of the database giant Oracle, believe that this development will lead to a world of cheap, bare-bones "network computers," which will have no need for Windows. "The purpose of the Java Fund isn't to overturn Microsoft," Marc Andreessen says. "The purpose of the Java Fund is to drive a paradigm shift that, if it plays out, would overturn Microsoft."

Whatever Doerr's motives with re-

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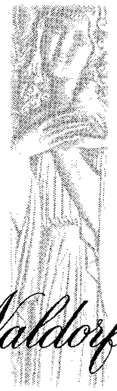

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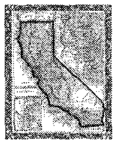

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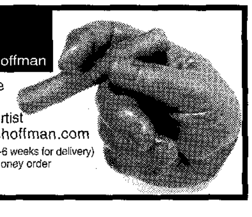
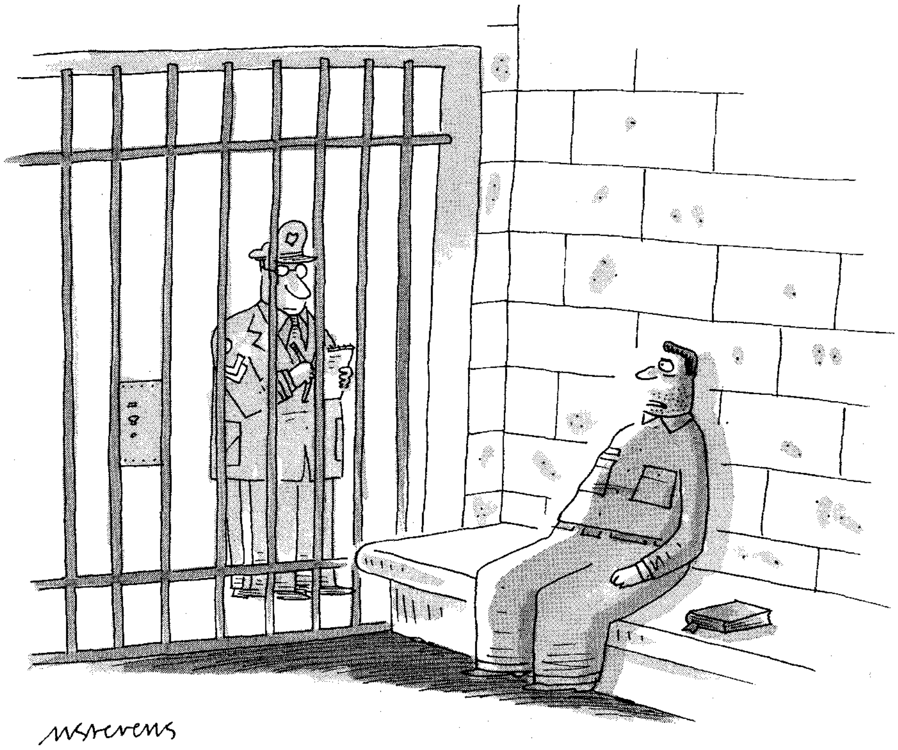




"Nothing for me, thanks. I had a late last lunch."

spect to Microsoft, his enthusiasm for Java and the Net is boundless, and he riffs about them with such passion and speed and audacity that skepticism seems all but futile. "It's possible—the Net has been *under*hyped!" he crows. There are those, of course, who would suggest that this is all a bit self-serving. In the years since Netscape's I.P.O., the stock market has made a habit of lavishly rewarding Internet start-ups, regardless of their actual performance. The market seemed to pay little mind to the fact that At Home lost twenty-three million dollars in the first half of this year and isn't likely to make money in the foreseeable future. Kleiner has profited handsomely from this sort of investor insouciance, although last year several of its I.P.O.s, like others in the high-tech sector, came out strong only to see their stocks sag as the market arrived at a more sober view of their prospects.

Doerr is a salesman who, despite his well-timed flashes of self-deprecation, appears to be his own most receptive customer. Although he relishes technical risk, almost all his serious failures, like GO and Dynabook, have occurred after he convinced himself and the people within what McNealy calls his "sphere of evangelism" that some unproved, futuristic technology would magically turn into the next big thing. "He's such a great seller that he can sell ideas that are wrong—dead wrong," Jim Clark says. To which Doerr replies, "People criticize me for being too grandiose, and it's probably true. But why not think big? Maybe you get a big belly flop. Or maybe you get the next Netscape."

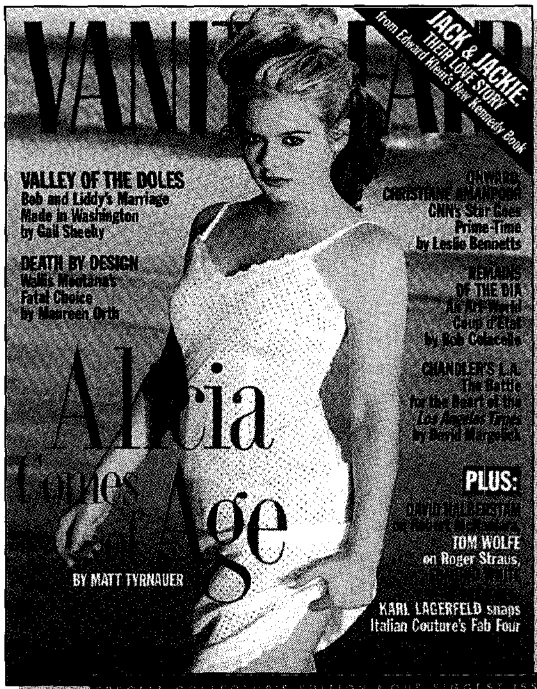
A WEEK before the At Home I.P.O., Doerr and I went to see Tom Jermoluk, the company's C.E.O., make a presentation to a group of potential investors. The event took place at 6:30 A.M. at the Mandarin Oriental hotel, in downtown San Francisco. Afterward, Doerr asked what I thought, and I told him that the presentation was impressive but that scheduling it at the crack of dawn was deeply immoral. He deadpanned, "There is no sacrifice too great to bring technology to a needy world."

Whether the world really needs to receive the Internet over cable-TV lines, at speeds up to three hundred times as fast as it does now, remains to be seen. Another unanswered question is whether the consortium of cable-TV firms that are At Home's main backers will be able to overcome their congenital inertia and actually deploy the service widely anytime soon. And still another question is what effect Gates will have on the company's future. Not long ago, he spent a billion dollars of Microsoft's idle cash to take an eleven-and-a-half-per-cent stake in one of At Home's backers, Comcast, and he is now trying to persuade the cable industry to use his technology to deliver the Internet on TV. At the same time, Gates is known to be annoyed that he has been shut out of the At Home action; recently, one of At Home's top executives visited Microsoft to discuss ways that the two companies might coöperate.

For Doerr, perhaps the biggest question is how much longer he will stick with venture capital. Last fall, he played a key part in defeating a California ballot initiative, Proposition 211, that would have made it easier to sue high-tech firms for dips in their stock prices. In recent months, he has been devoting more and more of his networking to politics. Bill Clinton and, more frequently, Al Gore seek his counsel. In June, the three of them shared the stage at the Vice-President's conference on the family, in Nashville, during which Doerr unveiled a novel venture fund designed to finance public-school "start-ups, speed-ups, and turnarounds." Indeed, Doerr, a nominal Republican who supported Clinton last fall, has been urged to run for office himself; the joke making the rounds in Silicon Valley is "Gore and Doerr in 2004." Meanwhile, he has long been tempted by the idea of being a C.E.O. (Before he found Barksdale, he had considered taking on Netscape.) Doerr says he has thought hard about both options and has rejected them. Yet he admits to being "haunted by the idea that it would somehow be a failure of courage and imagination to go on doing the same thing."

On the day At Home went public, though, it was hard to imagine him doing anything else. A little after noon, Doerr, Jermoluk, and the others headed out of Morgan Stanley's headquarters and into Times Square. Looking up, they saw the lights on the side of the building flashing congratulations and the stock's opening price. The sun was bright, the At Home guys were giving each other high fives, the tourists were looking on, bemused, and Doerr was still selling. "I can remember the first time I saw color TV, and this is more important than that." He smiled. "And who knows? It might even work." ♦

IRRESISTIBLE!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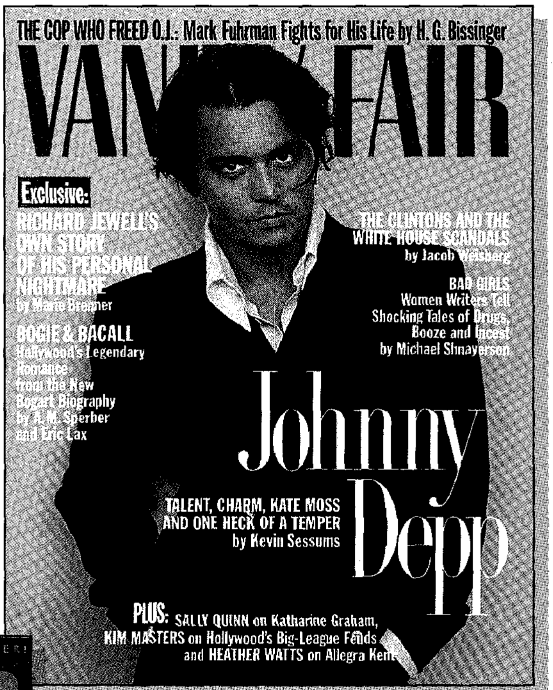
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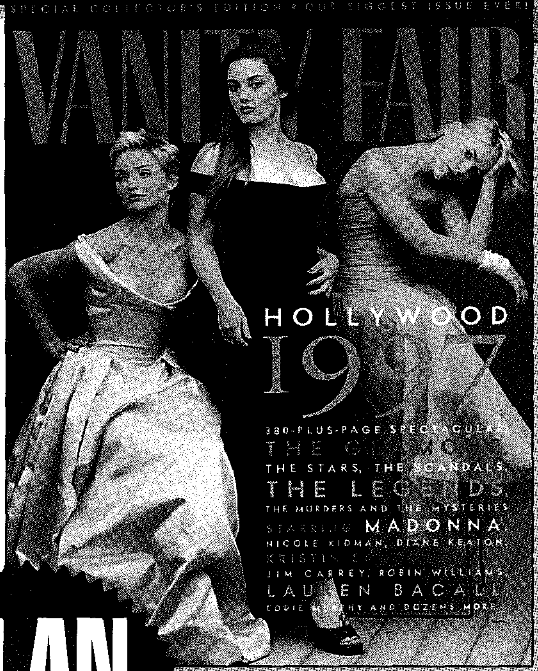
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A CRITIC AT LARGE

BALMORALITY

Queen Victoria's very un-Victorian ways.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

WAS there anyone less Victorian than Queen Victoria? We owe the stock image of the granite-faced virago, glowering from her widow's weeds, to photographs taken in the aftermath of Prince Albert's death or in her imperial old age. But the legendary glumness was more the result of Victoria's apparent dislike of photographers than of any permanent melancholia. At least one surviving photograph shows her smiling broadly, suggesting what we know from many witnesses: that she was, in fact, often and easily amused. She was amused enough by Disraeli to send him a valentine with cherubs lolling amid clouds. She was amused enough by her husband's depositing a freshly slaughtered stag at her feet to sketch the scene before the blood congealed. And she was especially amused by her Highland servant John Brown—amused enough to address him in at least one letter as "darling."

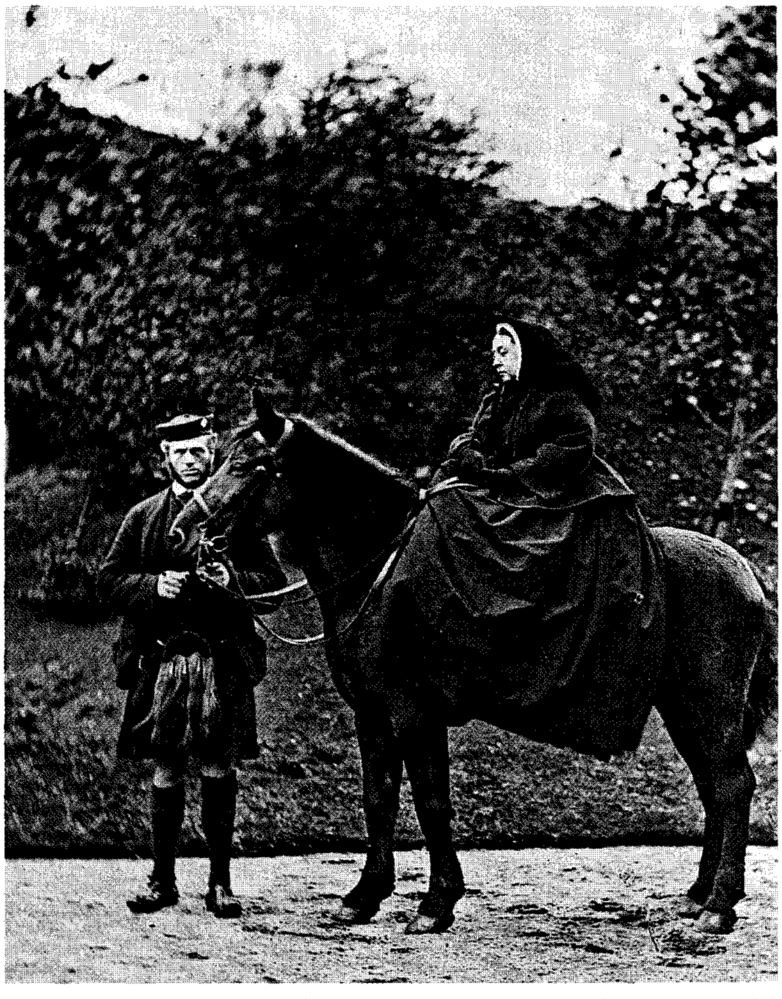
The real Victoria would not have recognized herself in the pieties sanctimoniously invoked by present-day conservatives as "Victorian virtues." Her family values were notoriously inconsistent—at times she proclaimed domesticity the perfect idyll and at other times detested the nursery as a vexing distraction from the rapture of her marriage. When her eldest daughter, Vicky, relayed that she was pregnant, the Queen's response was commiseration at the "horrid news." As for the icky business of breast-feeding, she would have none of it, and reproached her daughters for making "cows of themselves." Her religion was equally quirky. She believed the fires of Hell, with which stern Victorian preachers threatened the sinful, to be "absurd" and "unutterably revolting." The most famous victim of morbid grief in the nineteenth century, the Queen was no killjoy when it came to others. She hated the gloomy British Sunday and actively fought against Sabbatarian laws that forbade music in public parks or closed the museums and galleries; she wanted the people to have amusements on their one day off from work. She was also partial to a wee dram or three, horrifying Gladstone by fortifying her claret with whiskey. When a notoriously drunk footman almost burned down Windsor Castle with a naked candle, Victoria's response was not to have him dismissed but to extend her sympathies to the "poor man." Edith Sitwell claimed that when John Brown collapsed to the floor in an alcoholic stupor the Queen gallantly insisted that she had felt a slight but distinct tremor in the earth.

Victoria's passionate temper, by turns ecstatically exuberant, violently petulant, and masochistically tragic, presented a formidable challenge to her ministers. They all understood the fundamental principle of the British monarchy which held that the sovereign was possessed of two bodies—the body natural and the body politic. As the crown lawyers of Victoria's illustrious sixteenth-century predecessor, Elizabeth I, had explained:

> [The] Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident, to the Imbecility of Infancy or old Age, and to the like Defects that happen to the natural Bodies of other People. But . . . [the] Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, and constituted for the Direction of the People . . .and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects and Imbecilities.

The ideal sovereign was one who understood that the body natural became, in effect, a department of state, so that its dress, deportment, and ritualized display functioned as a symbol of the condition of the body politic. It also required majesty to negotiate artfully between the remote and the familiar, the magical and the commonplace, so that the king or queen could be seen to be both "one of us" and utterly unlike us.

The present Queen, who has been an exemplary practitioner of these skills, has seen the dignity of her body politic badly wounded by the nakedness of her children's bodies natural. In her worst



Master and servant in 1863: Victoria, who was an ardent admirer of good-looking men, responded to Brown's handsome presence and his careful devotion.

CORBIS-BETTMANN

moments, she must feel the Hanoverian inheritance hanging heavy over her crown, since in the period immediately prior to Victoria's accession, in 1837, the British constitutional monarchy was overloaded with "imbecilities" to the point of near-collapse. Victoria's grandfather, George III, had been as popular in Britain as he had been despised in America, but there had been the matter of his periodic insanity to cope with. In 1819, when Victoria was born, twelve of Farmer George's children survived, along with fifty-seven grandchildren. Unfortunately, fifty-six of these were illegitimate, which tells us all we need to know about the regal calibre of the next generation. Of those ahead of Victoria in the line of succession, George IV, as the Prince of Wales became, was a monster of self-indulgence, whose gross obesity never got in the way of his dandiacal narcissism. When he died, the obituary in the London *Times* declared that "there never was an individual less regretted by his fellow creatures than this deceased king." More to the point, his only surviving offspring, Princess Charlotte, died young. The next surviving brother, William, had ten children by his actress mistress Mrs. Jordan, but only two, who died in infancy, by Queen Adelaide. Third was the Duke of Kent, Victoria's father, who was a paragon of intelligence and decency compared with his brothers, one of whom, Ernest Duke of Cumberland, was commonly supposed to have raped his sister and murdered his valet. Unhappily, the Duke of Kent died when Victoria was eight months old.

Throughout her life, Victoria bemoaned (especially to her daughters) the loneliness and sorrows of her childhood. Her memory exaggerated its miseries, as if there had been nothing but sprigs of holly tied beneath her chin to encourage good posture. But it is true that she was isolated from the rest of the Royal Family by an Anglo-Irish adventurer named Sir John Conroy, who served as the Duchess of Kent's household adviser and attempted to exploit his indispensability to her as a way of controlling the young Heir Presumptive. To Victoria, Conroy was ever after the quintessential Bad Uncle, and for the rest of her life she would seek out Good Uncles on whose manly shoulders she could lean for support. She attached herself first to her beloved Uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians; he was followed by Lord Melbourne, who shepherded her with amazing tact and good nature through the terrifying rites of accession. At the beginning of her reign, the nineteen-year-old Queen astounded the politicians by her apparent composure and self-possession. At the same time, Victoria's body natural resisted being integrated smoothly within the demands of the body politic. When, for example, the time came for her Ladies of the Bedchamber, mostly political appointees, to be replaced as the Tories replaced the Whigs in the general election, Victoria would have none of it, complaining to the appalled Tory leader, Robert Peel, that she was being hounded and persecuted. Equally, she never forgave the politicians for denying her "Angel," Prince Albert, the title of King Consort, though she was persuasively reminded by the long-suffering Melbourne that those who would be given the power to create kings might then reasonably claim the power to depose them.

THE most dazzlingly successful of Britain's queens, Elizabeth I, liked to rebuff complaints about her refusal to marry with the retort that she was married to all her subjects. In this respect, Victoria was her exact opposite. Her marriage was such an obsession that even while Albert was alive it threatened to divorce her from the country that, by and large, found the Prince Consort a decent, well-meaning, but dauntingly Germanic figure. His work habits were doubtless admirable, but did he really need to sprint down the corridors of Buckingham Palace, clutching state papers, to save time? For Victoria, he could do no wrong (except the one time when they quarrelled over the management of the nursery, and the Queen accused him of as good as murdering their firstborn). She was certainly aware that she was plain, plump, and short ("We are rather small for a queen"), and as long as Albert was alive she could never quite believe her good fortune in landing the Prince Charming to whom she had, in agonies of expectation, popped the question. "Oh! To *feel* I was, and am, loved by such an *Angel* as Albert was *too great a delight to describe!* He is *perfection*," she wrote in her journal. After the exhausting wedding, she wrote, "I *never never* spent such an evening!!! My *dearest dearest dear* Albert sat on a footstool by my side, & his excessive love & affection gave me feelings of heavenly love & happiness. . . . He clasped me

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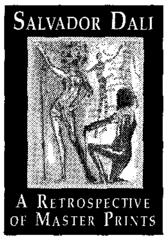

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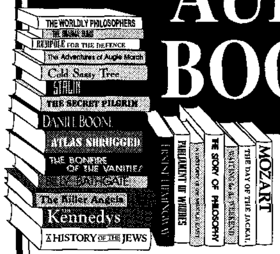

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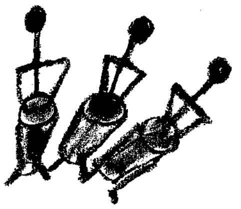
in his arms, and we kissed each other again and again.”

It was Albert who, for all his assiduous attention to public policy, both domestic and foreign, encouraged Victoria to create special retreats where her private person could be protected from public demands and perils—a not entirely paranoid concern, for Victoria was, in fact, the target of no fewer than seven attempts at assassination. These palatial safe houses were at opposite ends of the kingdom, and both were personally designed by the Prince: one at Osborne, on the Isle of Wight, separated from England by the Solent; the other, more famously, at Balmoral, in the Scottish Highlands. There Albert concocted a building clad in granite which was part Flemish gables, part French Renaissance windows, part Scottish baronial grandeur, and part Thuringian Schloss, complete with pepper-pot turrets. The interior, which sent Victoria into raptures, was covered in Royal Stuart tartan and enough thistles, as Lord Clarendon reported, to choke a donkey.

It was utterly un-English. And that was the point. Albert sensed the reserve on the part of the English aristocracy when it came to his intellectual earnestness, his constant exercises in Social Improvement, and his inability to conduct himself with the languid insouciance becoming to a gentleman. And Victoria and Albert thought much of the English ruling class snobbish, idle, and debauched. Conditioned by the novels of Walter Scott, they imagined the Highlands to be peopled by a *natural* aristocracy: rugged, honest, incorruptible—a people at one with their landscape. The rainy clime was itself supposed to be a tonic for the nerves, especially for Victoria, who found temperatures above fifty-five degrees insupportably hot. Needless to say, they failed to notice, or chose not to notice, that the empty, heathery hills had been created by the Highland clearances, one of the most infamous mass evictions of an entire rural class to have disgraced British history. But during the annual two-month stay in Scotland the Royal Family settled into the snug gemütlichkeit of what was dubbed Balmorality: the incognito “expeditions” to lochs and crofts, which fooled nobody; the sketching trips; the whiskey-laced conviviality at the Gillies’ Balls, where Victoria’s children danced the Caledonian reel; the relentless hauls of stag and ptarmigan, bagged even though Albert was not a very good shot.



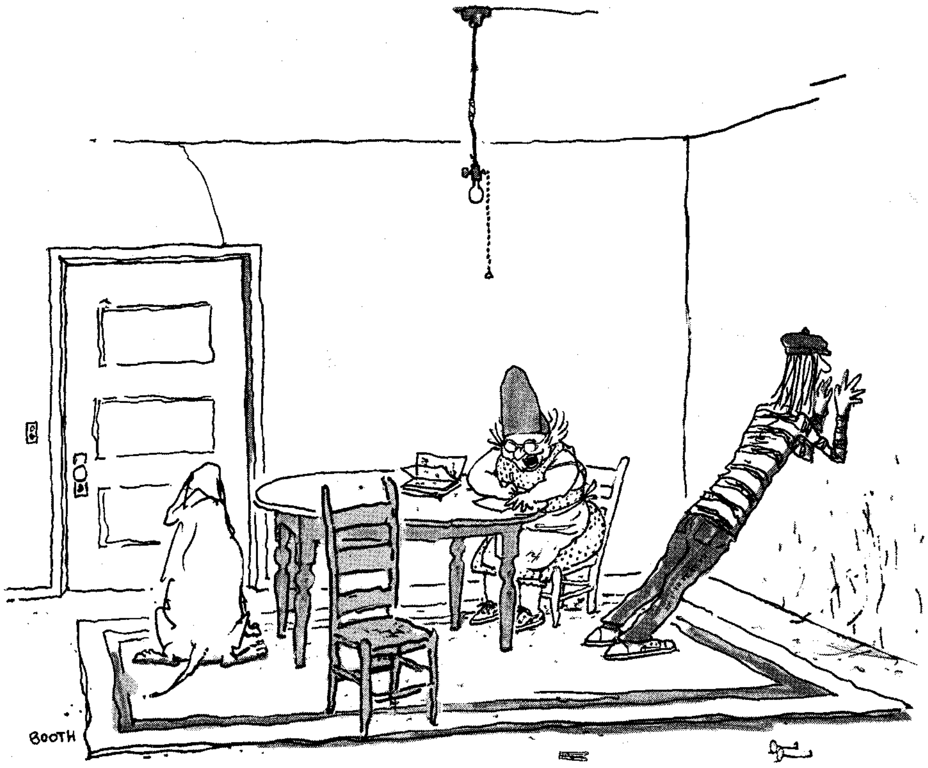
In December of 1861, the Prince Consort died of what was believed to be typhoid fever. The Queen insisted that he had perished from a combination of overwork and the shame brought on the family by the Prince of Wales, who was discovered to have been misbehaving with an actress. The trauma was so intense that members of Victoria’s household wondered if she might have inherited her grandfather’s insanity, and they began to inspect her complexion at mealtimes for signs of the high color they thought betrayed impending madness. And she did, at times, seem at the edge of her wits. The Blue Room, where the Prince died, was preserved exactly as it was at his demise. The clocks were stopped at 10:50 P.M., the precise instant of his death. The glass of water from which he took his last medicine remained. Each day, as if he were going to rise from the tomb, a fresh set of clothes was laid out by his valet, and hot water, soap, and towels were supplied for his toilet. Victoria kept a plaster cast of his hand on her bed. With delusion this complete, there was no chance that the call of the body politic would ever supersede the anguish of the body natural.

While the public initially sympathized with Victoria’s loss, her prolonged seclusion robbed the people of the show expected of the monarchy. After some years, they began to take it personally. The *Times* referred witheringly to “The Great Absentee,” and a notice appeared on the railings of Buckingham Palace offering premises to let or sell. When the Queen deigned to appear at the state opening of Parliament, she did so with such grim ill-humor that even those who had been desperate for her appearance thought it might have been better if she had stayed away. A pamphlet entitled “What Does She Do With It?” suggested that, since the monarch conspicuously failed to spend the nearly four hundred thousand pounds of the civil list on her public duties, she was hoarding the remainder to accumulate a private fortune. Worse even than this was the scandalous rumor, eagerly disseminated by magazines like *Tomahawk*, that the Queen’s body was, in effect, captive to the wiles of John Brown. There had long been an English obsession with the mysterious and worrying sexual potency of the Scots, so when Landseer’s unfortunate portrait of the Queen riding sidesaddle and attended by a black-kilted Brown was displayed at the Royal Academy it provoked not the admiration that Victoria had intended but an outbreak of nervous titters.

Brown, the son of a schoolmaster turned tenant farmer, had been employed at Balmoral in Albert’s day to act as a gillie, or personal attendant, and specifically to lead the Queen’s pony. A great deal of her early attachment to him resulted from her husband’s prolonged absences, as he attempted to stalk red deer. During sketching trips and pony trots, Victoria, who was an ardent admirer of good-looking men, responded to Brown’s handsome, meaty presence and to his careful devotion to her personal needs. His expertise at fastening her shawl or pinning her plaid was so decisive that she began to refer to him as a perfect combination of guide and maid, her trusty “indoor-outdoor” servant. After Albert died, this physical attentiveness became a crucial source of solace, especially since Victoria continued to hold the Prince of Wales at least partly responsible for her husband’s death. And when Brown rescued the Queen from an overturned carriage he showed himself to be not just her personal Highland gallant but her personal savior.

Without any direct hint of sexual opportunism, Brown did become the effective keeper of the Queen’s body natural at Balmoral, taking orders exclusively from her, partnering her in “The Flowers of Edinburgh” at the Gillies’ Ball, and patrolling the guest list at dinner, announcing abruptly on one occasion, “All what’s here dines with the Queen.” Most of the liberties committed by the brilliant Billy Connolly in John Madden’s film (with the exception of the hairy upper lip, which Brown kept fastidiously shaved) are absolutely accurate, if not understated. Brown did habitually address the Queen as “wumman” (as in “Hoots, wumman, canna ye hold yer head still!”); he upbraided her for wearing moldy dresses (“What’s this ye’ve got on today?”); and he was allowed to smoke a pipe in her presence, an unthinkable offense for any other courtier.

In 1867, the government was alarmed to learn that a public demonstration was



"Let's go for the four-slot toaster."

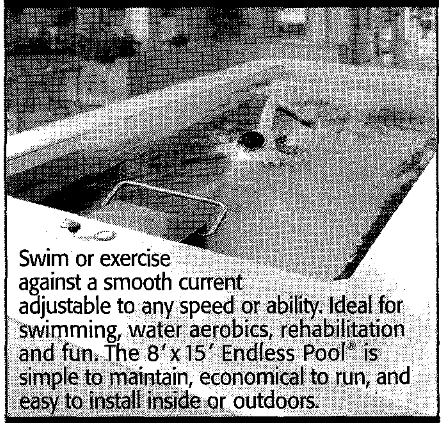
• •

being orchestrated to coincide with the Queen's appearance at a military review in Hyde Park, expressly so that the people could jeer at the inevitable figure of Brown, to be posted, as usual, on the "box" of her coach. Happily, the execution of the Emperor of Mexico supplied a timely pretext for cancelling the parade. But whenever it was suggested to Victoria that her servant might perhaps be a little less conspicuous she threw a tantrum: she stamped her foot and insisted that she would *not* be dictated to. In the end, as the film rightly suggests, it was Benjamin Disraeli (played to the life by Antony Sher), the most artful of all the Good Uncles and Albert substitutes, who grasped that John Brown would cease to be an issue once the Queen herself was again on regular public display. Instead of lecturing her on constitutional duties, as Gladstone did, Disraeli shamelessly exploited Victoria's fantasies. At his first audience as Prime Minister, he courted her, taking her hand between both of his to kiss. After that, Victoria was putty in those wicked old hands. "He is full of poetry, romance, and chivalry," she cooed. (The showmanship that endeared him to her—his dyed curls; the flashy vests; the rings worn over the black-gloved fingers; the knight-gallant manner of address, which came naturally to the romantic novelist—is precisely what most bothered the English ruling classes.) Disraeli duly became the Queen's pet exotic, and "the Faery," as he called the middle-aged widow, found herself feeling once more unaccountably girlish, and prepared to share her new lease on life with her people. When the Prince of Wales almost redeemed himself by nearly dying of typhoid fever in 1871, on the tenth anniversary of his father's death, the public was treated to the gratifying spectacle of a mother-and-prodigal-son reunion. It was followed first by a national service of thanksgiving at St. Paul's and, two days later, by a botched Irish Fenian assassination attempt, in which the ever-vigilant Brown threw himself at the assailant.

For some years, the Queen grieved bitterly over the condition of "poor" Brown's legs, which began to show alarming blotches and inflammations, the symptoms of erysipelas. This condition, aggravated by his long devotion to "sperruts," and the physical rigors of serving the Queen, eventually killed him, in 1883. Once again, Victoria declared herself "utterly crushed" by the loss of "the truest heart that ever beat"; she dedicated the next volume of her "Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands" to his memory (the first had been dedicated to Albert) and, as if in sympathy with Brown's fatal condition, temporarily lost the use of her own legs.

HE was not the last of the Strong Silent Men whom Victoria apparently required as a condition of surviving as a constitutional monarch. For her Golden Jubilee, in 1887, the governor of the North-West Provinces of the Indian Empire sent her as a present two *khitmagars*, or table servants, one of whom was named Abdul Karim. The son of a native doctor in Agra, he was called upon to teach Hindi and Urdu to the Queen, and before long the members of the household found themselves, to their consternation, saddled with a brown Brown, who was showered, like his kilted predecessor, with all kinds of favors and official decorations, given houses at Osborne and Balmoral, and barely allowed out of the Queen's sight from waking till bedtime. He was, she insisted, a "thorough gentleman," and she brushed aside all objections to the violation of custom and rank, especially from her Indian nobles, as "race prejudice" (which, in part, it certainly was). When the royal household went as far as to threaten collective resignation if the *munshi* (teacher) should again be brought along for the royal vacation in the South of France, Victoria erupted like a volcano, sending all the objects on her desk (and there were a lot) crashing to the floor with a majestic sweep of her arm.

Because of the many repressions committed in her name, it is often forgotten that Victoria was a child of Romanticism, who believed all her life that her heart, rather than her head, would offer the surest path to the right conduct. Those who handled her best—Melbourne, Albert, and Disraeli—understood that she needed to be stirred by sentiment as well as prodded by duty in order to act her regal part with conviction. But sentimental sovereignty, as the present Queen knows, has its dangers. While the duller, worthier members of the Windsor dynasty (George V and George VI) are generally assumed to be the true Victorians, it is in fact the easily infatuated, wayward Princes of Wales—Bertie (Edward VII), David (Edward VIII), and the present incumbent, struggling manfully with his own tortured passions—who, for better or worse, seem to have inherited the authentic bloodline of the tempestuous Queen. ♦



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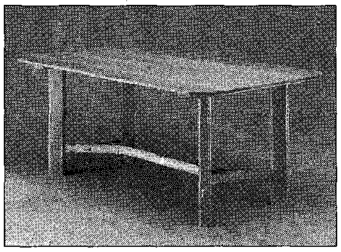

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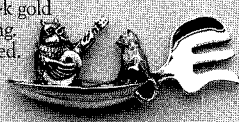

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ANNALS OF POPULAR CULTURE

SAL STABILE, FOR REAL

Every year, some kid makes a movie on a shoestring that gets picked up by Hollywood. What's life like when you're that kid?

BY MARK SINGER

BECAUSE we're talking Hollywood, where the writer is that laughable *schmendrik* so low in the food chain he gets flossed after breakfast, the story alone counts for only so much. Hence the inclination to embroider the story *about* the story, the narrative of how the movie got made. Salvatore Stabile, an independent filmmaker whose driver's license says he'll soon turn twenty-three, began embroidering a couple of years ago, when he first smelled money. At that point, he'd completed a rough version of "Gravesend," a dimly lit black comedy about four young men in Brooklyn and a violent Saturday night in their heading-nowhere lives. Would anyone seriously object if, to entice audiences of warm-bodied ticket buyers, Stabile perpetrated a little fable about who he was and where "Gravesend" came from? Was he not, after all, a natural storyteller?

The unembellished facts are these: Sal Stabile grew up quickly in a middle-income high-rise at Twenty-fifth Avenue and Benson Avenue, in a not very "Leave It to Beaver" neighborhood where Bensonhurst slouches toward Coney Island—a slice of Brooklyn called Gravesend. In 1992, he graduated from a Catholic high school in Bay Ridge and immediately moved to Manhattan, where he shared with his maternal grandmother a one-bedroom apartment in Little Italy. That fall, he enrolled in New York University, intending to major in screenwriting. The following spring, his grandmother died and left him five thousand dollars. Along with what he was earning as a waiter in a restaurant on Mulberry Street, the inheritance was supposed to help pay his tuition. But after four semesters at N.Y.U. he dropped out. He had a shelf of books about screenwriting, plus a file cabinet filled with screenplays—by Francis Ford Coppola, William Goldman, Robert Towne, Paul Schrader, Paddy Chayefsky, and Richard Price, among others—and he'd written the draft of a script he felt ready to shoot. When his parents urged him to stay in school, he replied, "What should I do? Walk into Miramax with a diploma? Don't you think they might pay more attention if I walked in with a film?"

That he couldn't afford to pay actors didn't interfere with his presumption that he was entitled to work with professionals. In *Back Stage* he placed an ad announcing a casting call for a "trailer" for a feature film. "I was talking through my ass," he told me not long ago. "I didn't even know what a trailer was. What I meant was I was shooting a short part of a movie." Neglecting to specify the ages and sexes of the actors meant having to wade through seven thousand head shots. ("It was crazy. My mailman refused to deliver them. I had to go pick them up at the post office.") He invited forty young actors to an audition and selected three for lead roles; he found a fourth while waiting on tables. Miramax, Stabile assured all involved, had made a solid offer to finance the film, but first he had to deliver some footage—the sort of brazen bluff that would seem to suggest a bright future in the business.

Tony Tucci, who wound up with the role of Zane, a bullying psychopath and the story's protagonist—"Zane wasn't well-liked. We were his friends, and we didn't like him," Stabile says in a voice-over narration—told me, "I hooked on to Sal because he talked shit, but I didn't realize that at the time. I thought he had something going for him." Friends, friends of friends, family members, and neighborhood acquaintances from Brooklyn and Manhattan were cast in minor roles. At a New Year's Eve party, Stabile met a retired-cop-turned-cinematographer named Joseph Dell'Olio, who had walked a beat in Brooklyn and knew Gravesend from having lived there for ten years. Dell'Olio read the script, recognized the characters, and agreed to work gratis, with the understanding that he'd collect something if and when "Gravesend" turned up in a theatre. The film would be shot with a handheld camera in sixteen-millimetre color—plus eight-millimetre black-and-white flashbacks of the four main characters—and Dell'Olio could get by without a lighting assistant, because he had only two lights. Whoever happened to be available handled the location sound. Sal's girlfriend and his mother did the catering.

"Sal knows as much about behavior as I knew about lenses when I was his age," Steven Spielberg says of Stabile.

DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

Stabile had written dialogue for disparate scenes that he hadn't quite determined how to thread together. The story, he knew, would begin with Zane and his pals Chicken (Tom Malloy), Mikey (Thomas Brandise), and Ray (Michael Parducci) hanging out in the basement of a house that belonged to Ray's brother. A gun would go off accidentally, and what to do with a corpse would drive the plot. There was no shortage of discussions with the actors about the characters and their "motivations," and no shortage of faith in the merit of improvisation. During the fall of 1994, they spent seven days filming in various Brooklyn locations: a house in Dyker Heights, assorted street corners, under the elevated tracks in Bensonhurst. The Stabile family car, a defeated Buick Regal with a screwdriver jammed in the ignition, hauled equipment and also provided the setting for several scenes. In early December, Sal borrowed a screening room at N.Y.U. and showed the actors and a few other people a less than fully gestated rough cut. By his own estimation, it was "pretty bad," but it stopped short of being hopelessly bad.

Next came two months of rewriting, followed by ten more days of filming. Stabile rented a Steenbeck editing machine in early March, installed it in his apartment, and cloistered himself through the spring and most of the summer of 1995, until he had seventy-five minutes of footage that he could transfer to videotape and submit to the third annual Hamptons International Film Festival, on Long Island. The festival directors accepted "Gravesend" as a "work-in-progress"—a designation that suited Stabile fine, because he wasn't yet prepared for the scrutiny of reviewers or distributors. A couple of plot gaps still needed to be filled, and he figured that it would take sixty thousand dollars to pay bills he already owed and to cover the final shooting, editing, sound mixing, and printing.

Only about fifty people at the festival actually saw "Gravesend"—technical complications, never mind the details—but one of them was Toni Ross, who was the chairwoman of the event and was the daughter of Steve Ross, the late chairman of Time Warner. She agreed to become an investor and also enlisted her brother Mark and a friend, Dan Edelman, who had a background in film production and had helped finance the completions of the independent films "Roger & Me" and "Paris Is Burning." Sixty thousand dollars entitled them to a joint credit as executive producers. Not the least of Stabile's challenges, once he had the money to complete the film, was coaxing the actors back to work, since a couple of them had made it plain that they weren't personally fond of him. The last scenes were shot in late February of 1996, and by Memorial Day weekend he was able to board a plane bound for the Seattle Film Festival, accompanied by a finished print "still wet from the lab."

Both in the Hamptons and in Seattle, Stabile embraced publicity interviews as opportunities to assume a persona that seemed straight out of "Mean Streets"—a tactic to divert the discovery that he was actually a kid from a solid family, with a father who worked for an airline and a mother who was a paralegal, an honor student who alternately wrote poetry and fiction and fantasized about playing catcher for the Yankees. "I wanted to come across as the least likely person ever to make a movie," he told me. "So that when people sat down to watch this they'd be expecting a total piece of shit, and then they'd see this great film and be blown away." He more than implied that, in its significant particulars, the movie script was plucked intact from his own life. The cleverly laconic narrator who identified himself as "Sal Stabile" had, in other words, fortuitously avoided the bleak destiny of the dead-enders in "Gravesend," which had a primitive texture that radiated a documentary shimmer. For a couple of interviews, he trotted out a phantom older brother, David, who he said had died during a drug deal. Sal himself owned up to a string of misdemeanor arrests and a rotation through drug rehab at fourteen. He left home at seventeen, he said, because his parents "threw me out." He bragged about "beating the shit" out of a fellow N.Y.U. student. There were occasional lapses, failures to keep his stories consistent. One day, he'd say he made "Gravesend" with the five thousand dol-

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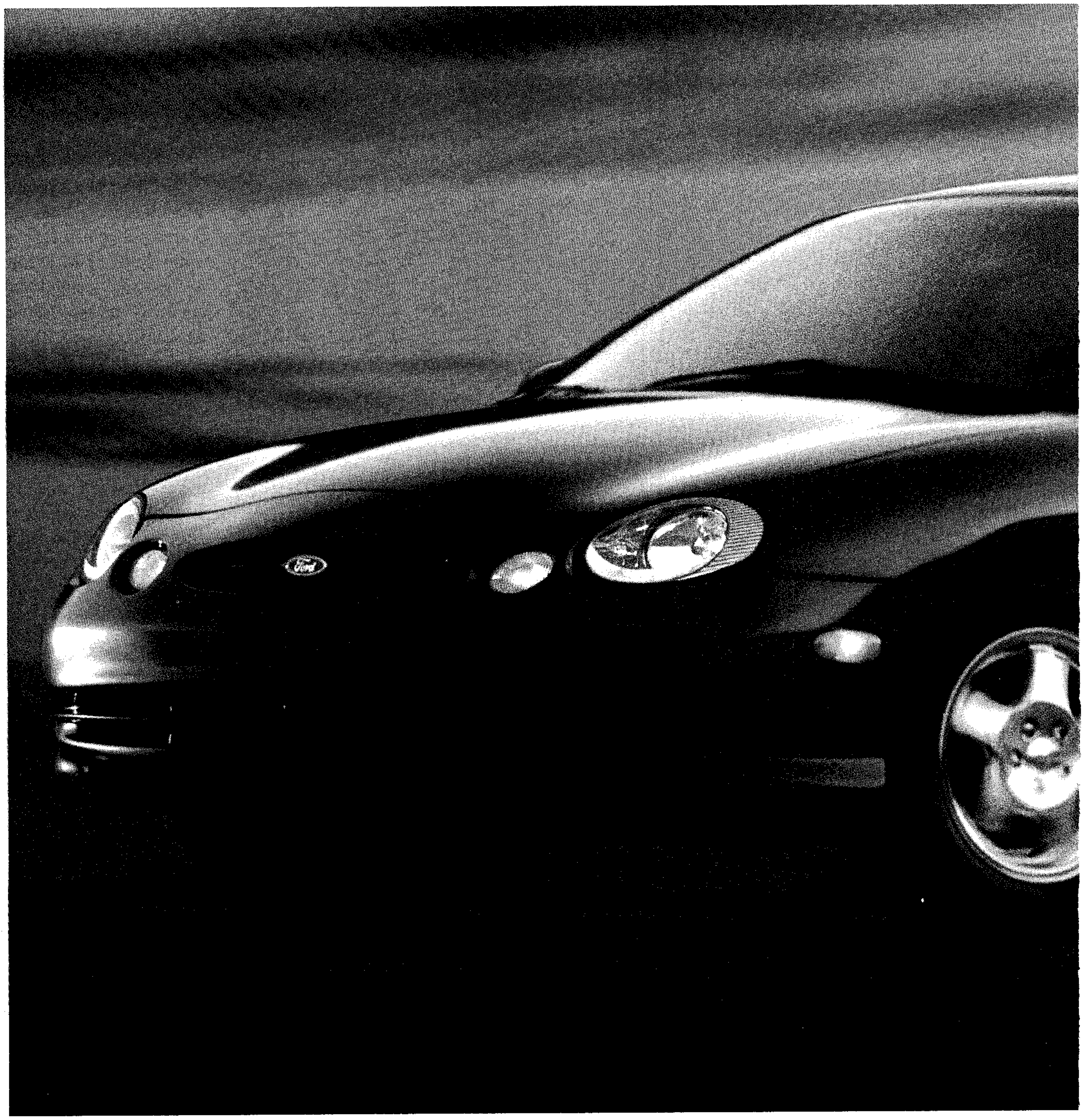
(But that can be



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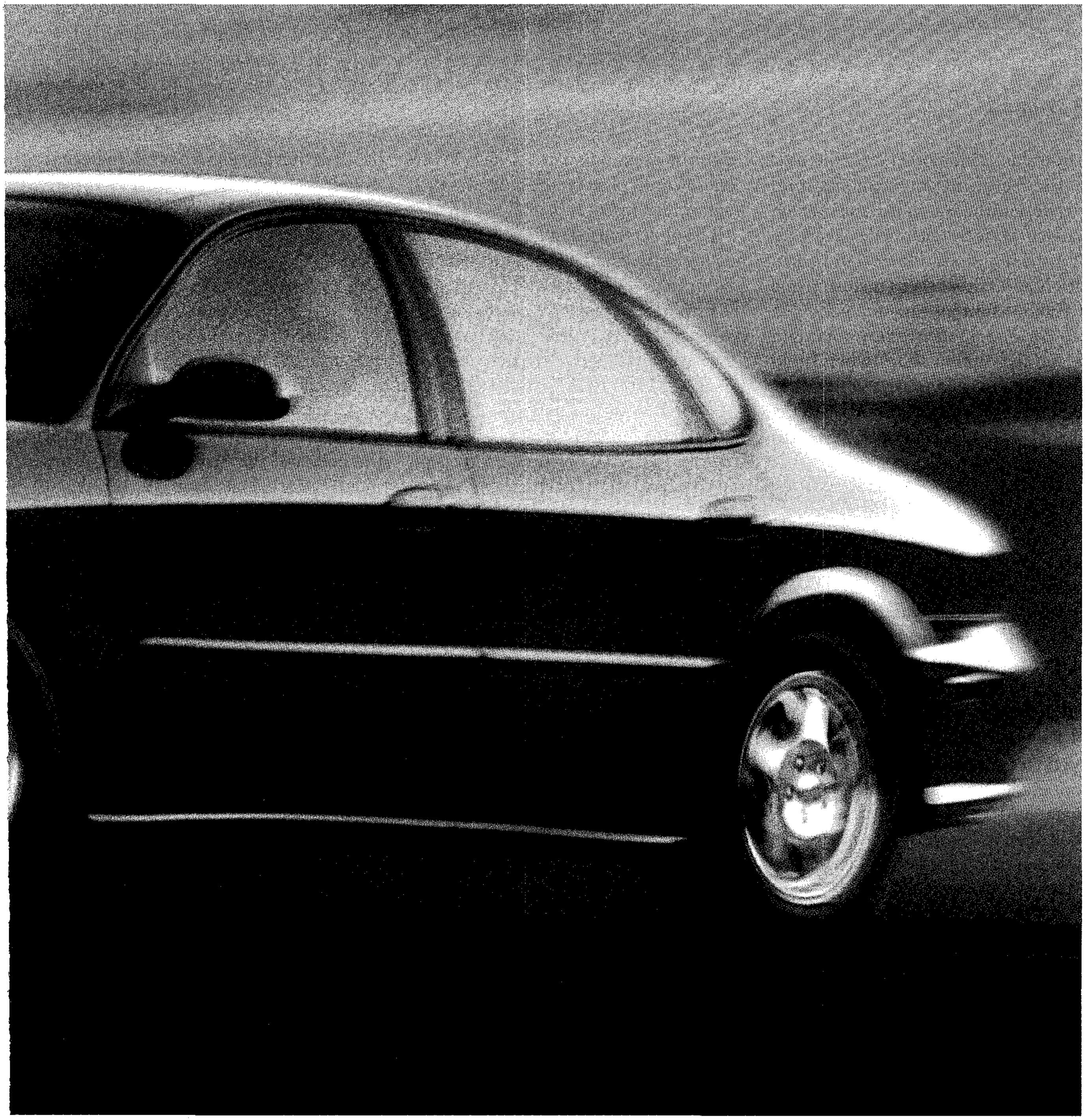

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lars from his grandmother, and the next he'd describe having got the money from a drug dealer who was in jail. He claimed to have cut costs by not exactly paying retail for the film stock. How? "I'm Italian. That's how." His mother's maiden name was Gallo—did that ring any bells? He posed for one publicity shot holding a gun, and the caption said, "When I told my parents I wanted to be a writer, they called me a fag." All this was news to the folks at home, and they were less than amused.

THE Cinderella myth has become a well-established leitmotiv of the independent-film world. In the familiar scenario, a nimble-witted, usually ethnic-flavored tyro bankrolls a movie using, say, the insurance settlement from a near-fatal motorcycle accident. After wowing them at, typically, the Sundance Film Festival, the director is anointed wunderkind du jour, thereby arousing the acute envy and resentment of thousands of film-school graduates: they pray for the nouveau auteur's imminent self-destruction. This is more or less the position in which Stabile now finds himself—the price he has to pay for having rendered in "Gravesend" an often perfectly pitched tale, both horrifying and laugh-out-loud funny, that explores a disturbed and disturbing segment of youth culture without ever resorting to pop-cultural name-brand-dropping or Gen X hand-wringing. Within a week of the Seattle festival, a review in *Variety* called "Gravesend" a "remarkable debut for self-taught Brooklyn helmer Sal Stabile." He was applauded for his "edgy sense of form" and "surprisingly original feel for film language." A scene depicting the four main characters, their gas tank almost empty and their trunk brimming with human slaughter, singing along tearfully as Louis Armstrong's rendition of "What a Wonderful World" plays on the radio was pronounced "an instant classic."

The phone started ringing, which Stabile recognized as a general summons to Los Angeles—his first visit. He schlepped the print of "Gravesend" in a plastic garbage bag and never let it leave his side. "If we went to dinner, I took it with me," he said. "That was all I had. I was almost twenty-two years old, and I felt like I had nothing else to show for my life." Dan Edelman agreed to escort him through the thickets, and quickly arranged two screenings. At the second, four agents from the Creative Artists Agency showed up, the most senior of whom was Robert Bookman. "I flipped over it," Bookman later said. "It couldn't have been more crude in some ways, but it was really brilliant." On the spot, he told Stabile he wanted him as a client. C.A.A., Stabile knew, was the most powerful agency in Hollywood. Instead of being cowed, however, he itemized a wish list. "They asked me what I wanted," he said. "I told them I wanted a distributor for 'Gravesend.' They mentioned several directors—Jonathan Demme, Oliver Stone, Steven Spielberg, Marty Scorsese—and I asked whether C.A.A. could get one of them to look at the film and agree to get behind it in some way. I said I wanted another filmmaker championing my career, I didn't want to become just another guy with a development deal at Paramount. And they said O.K. to everything."

Before long, C.A.A. had delivered not one but two of Stabile's avatars—Stone and Spielberg. First, Stone lent his imprimatur to "Gravesend"—the words "Oliver Stone Presents" appear above the title—and then he helped guide it to a distributor, Island Digital Media. ("Gravesend" opens in New York on September 5th.) Quid pro quo, Stabile plans to write and direct a film for Illusion, Stone's production company, though not before he makes a movie for the Spielberg factory, DreamWorks SKG, with whom he has a two-picture deal.

"I got this phone call at seven in the morning," Stabile told me. "It woke me up, and there's this voice saying, 'It's Steven.' I have a brother Steven, and I wondered what trouble he was in. I said, 'Steven! Where are you?' He said, 'L.A.' I said, 'Why are you calling me at seven o'clock in the morning?' He said, 'Who's *this*?' I said, 'Sal. Who's this? You sound so funny. You're Steven—Steven who?' He said, 'Steven Spielberg.' Now I realize he's up at four in the morning. I also realize I'm in my underwear. I said, 'Oh my God, could you hold on one second?' I started putting clothes on. Then I sat down on the bed, and the first words out of my mouth were 'I love "Jaws"!' Later, when I told my father that Spielberg called me, he said, 'Sal, you don't have to lie to impress us.' I said, 'No, Dad, he really did call me. I talked to Steven Spielberg. And I really have this deal with Oliver Stone.' "

Soliciting Stone's appraisal of "Gravesend," I called his office one day recently, and he rang me back on a cellular phone during drive time. After a dramatic opening declamation—"Fuck! Shit! Hold on! I've got a bee on my fucking leg! There . . . it's a wounded bee. Christ, this is like having a rattlesnake in your car. Shit! Hold on. Let me get out of the car. . . . O.K., I'm back. Green light. Shoot"—he said, " 'Gravesend' is a real, authentic, wonderful first film. It felt like it came from Sal's life. Parts of it look like it was shot on Kleenex. Watching it, you feel like you're dropping in as a witness on some very authentic-feeling dialogue. He has a knack for staging action that he knows—whether he knows he has it or not."

Was it true, I asked—this was a point of pride with Stabile—that Stone had called him "a really twisted guy"?

"Sure, I guess I said that," Stone said. "Probably that or 'a sick motherfucker.' I like him. He's a feisty little character. He understands the humor of impossibly awkward situations."

The encomium that I elicited from

Spielberg was delivered with somewhat more restraint: "He is fluent in his own life, which makes him the most personal of filmmakers. Sal knows as much about behavior as I knew about lenses when I was his age."

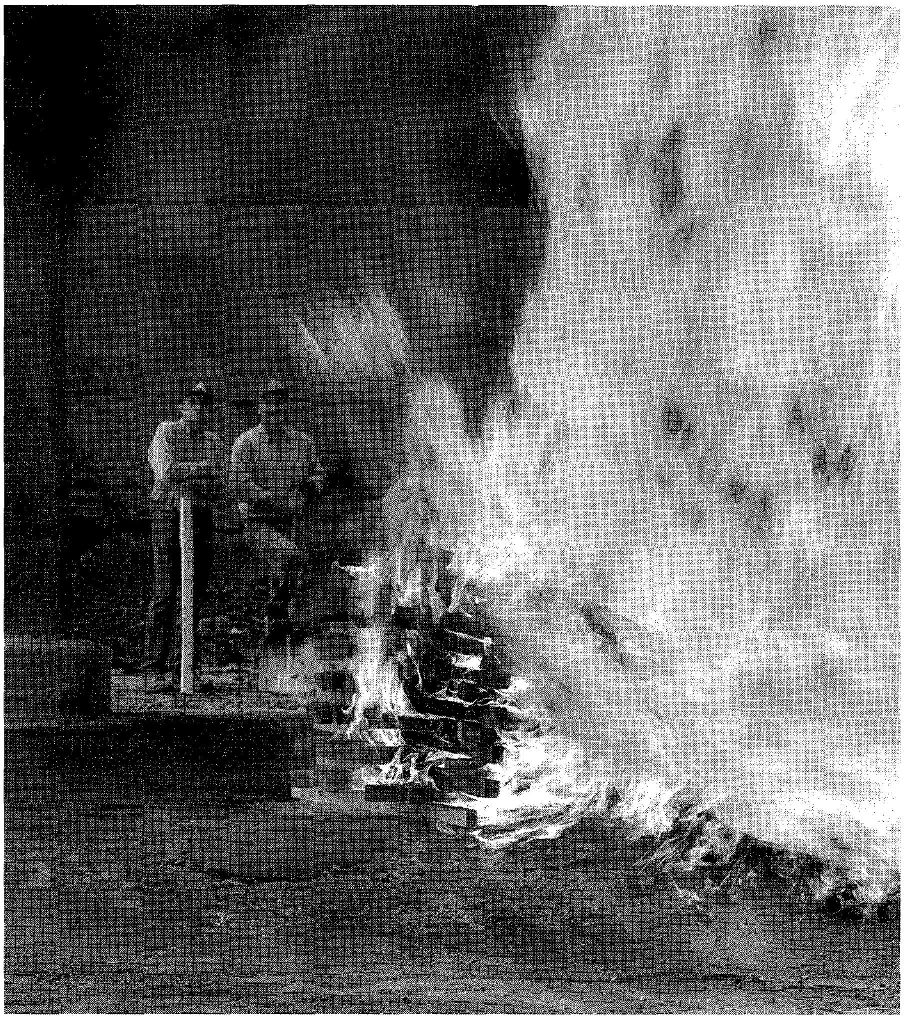
LAST month, in Los Angeles, I spent a couple of days tagging along as Stabile cruised in a rented Mustang convertible, dividing his time between a lab in Glendale, where a master print of "Gravesend" was being transferred to a video format, and appointments all around town with film-production executives. Stabile seemed to approach these encounters with an open mind and no illusions. "Certain people just want to take a meeting with you," he said. "They just want to schmooze. Everybody knows that nothing is sacred. They're hoping my next project with Spielberg falls through the loops and I'll end up with them. Everybody wants to know what's next. Everybody wants your second picture. They want to create your career."

Perhaps on the advice of his consiglieri, Bookman and Edelman (Edelman has agreed to co-produce his next film)—or perhaps obeying his own instincts—Stabile has traded his street-punk pose for a low-key self-confidence leavened by an ingratiating self-effacement. Watching him in action, I was reminded of the adage "Hollywood is high school with money." Was Stabile's preternatural ease attributable to the fact that he had only recently escaped from high school? Or was he, as I often sensed, a middle-aged Tinseltown sage trapped inside a not-quite-twenty-three-year-old body?

One morning, on the Sony lot, he and Edelman arrived for a sit-down with Todd Black, the head of production of Mandalay Pictures, whose chairman is Peter Guber. The meeting, which took place in the so-called Burma Room—faux-antique map of Southeast Asia on one wall, glass conference table, brown leather-and-wood chairs, brown Oriental rug—began with Black gushing, "So, I'm really, really happy to meet you," followed by "Wow, you really are a baby."

"I'm a kid," Stabile confessed. "What can I tell you?"

The improvisational energy of "Gravesend," Black decided, reflected the influence of John Cassavetes, and he mentioned having just come from a meeting



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with Sidney Lumet, where the topic of discussion was a remake of "Gloria," one of Cassavetes' last pictures.

"The original film was very good," Black said. "But there were some missed opportunities, some ways it could have been even better."

"Didn't you have a director who just left that picture?" Stabile asked.

"We had a director we just had to let go. But it's fine, because now we have Sidney Lumet."

"What? You called Sidney—you didn't call me? I'm offended."

When the conversation turned to "Gravesend," Black said, "Just take me through. Who's a real actor? How about the guy they asked to help them bury the body?"

"JoJo the Junkie? No. He's just a guy I know from Mulberry Street. The four leads are all real actors."

"Wow. That's pretty fucking impressive."

"And I worked with the actors," Stabile said. "The hardest part of making this movie was getting everybody to show up. It was tricky. They didn't necessarily want to be there. It was cold. I couldn't pay anybody."

"How did you incentivize them?"

"You just work with people. I got to know these guys. I worked with each one. I knew which buttons to push. And I let them interact. There were parts of the film where I was letting them tell me what the scene should be. I would just let them go up to the point that I didn't like what they were doing, and I'd step in and say no, yes, whatever."

"That's smart," Black said. "You realize what you did? You put yourself in a more powerful position by doing that. You *listened.* Just by listening, you made your role as a director more powerful. Sal, promise me: Whatever you do, don't ever let me or DreamWorks or Scott Rudin or Joe Blow in any other studio force Hollywood ways onto your filmmaking. Because that would impair it."

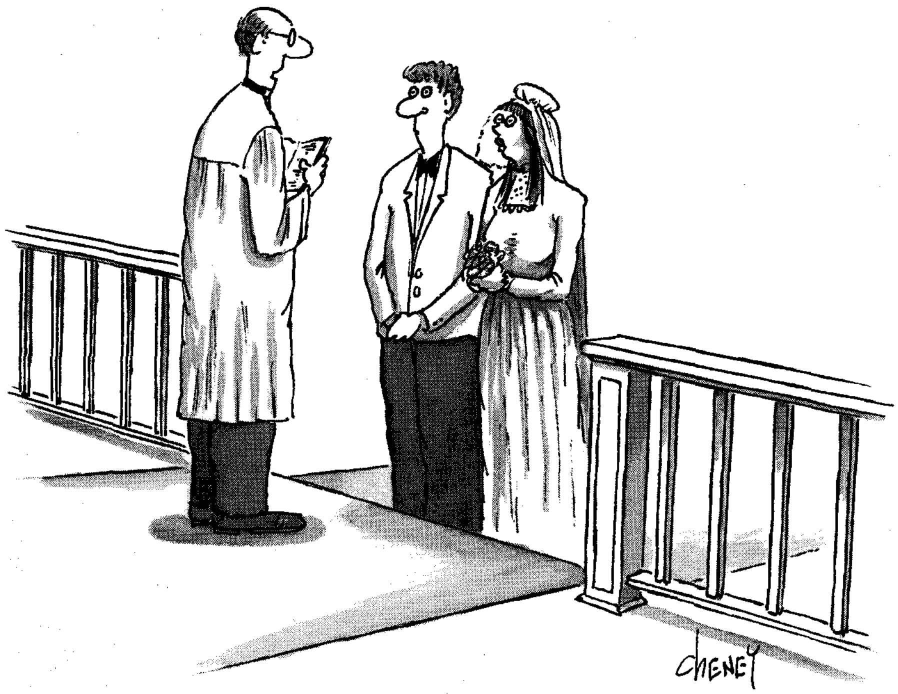
"I think I realize that."

"I think it's just incredibly important not to be seduced."

"Look, I have nothing against making commercial pictures," Stabile said. "I want nothing more than to be able to walk into my agent's office on a Monday morning after we've grossed eighty million over the weekend. The difference is, I don't want to make the film for a hundred and ten million. And I don't want anyone on the set to get paid more than I do. Because I've been there since the beginning. I've worked harder than anyone."

A colleague of Black's, Ori Marmur, had joined the discussion, and now he launched into the sort of fawning hyperbole Stabile had become familiar with: "I hope you realize we screen a ton of movies here and rarely does something stand out as much as your film. We wait weeks—months, sometimes—for a movie that we can respond to. It's very, very rare in our positions to see a talent like yours."

When Todd Black chimed in, Stabile said, "Please. Slow down. Say it one at a time. I want to take it all in." So they kept it up until he'd had enough. "I just want to hear what you have to say after my second picture," he said. "Let's see what happens then. You think you guys will still be willing to take a meeting with me?"



"And do you, Rebecca, promise to make love only to Richard, month after month, year after year, and decade after decade, until one of you is dead?"

LAST year, Stabile moved from Manhattan back to Brooklyn, and no one who has his best interests at heart has suggested that for the time being he should stray far from his home turf. Soon, he hopes, he'll finish a novel he began writing four years ago, and he's been polishing the screenplay of "Dancing with Angels," his first DreamWorks project. "A black comedy about a family in Brooklyn dealing with the darkest period of their lives" is how he describes it, and when he's asked about his progress he has a reply down pat: "It's going good. We're doing our fourth draft. Every time we do one, it gets ten times better. There's no rush. When it's right, we'll know it. When we're in production, we're in production. I mean, the movie's gonna be made, with or without DreamWorks."

Seated in his second-floor walkup in Bay Ridge the other day, he elaborated a point I'd heard him make frequently but wasn't sure I believed; namely, that, the Hollywood hierarchies notwithstanding, he would rather write than direct. "When I say that, people look at me strangely," he acknowledged. "They seem to be saying, 'You just did the impossible and now you don't want to reap the benefits?' In fact, I do want to direct, and the movies I want to make are very personal. But directing is something I do as a job, and my whole goal is to be able to sit home and write.

"When I take these meetings, I tell everybody that, if they have a script they need somebody to rewrite, send it to me, I'll look at it. But one of the first things I told Bob Bookman was 'Please, spare me the gangster scripts. Send me a quality romantic comedy. Send me a thriller. Just don't send me another "Gravesend." ' And I never want to make a movie and have an audience go into the theatre expecting anything in particular."

When the New York State lottery

jackpot got up to seventy million dollars a couple of months ago, Stabile had a scare. He and a friend agreed to go partners on a ticket, and the night of the drawing she called and told him they'd won. "She read me the numbers," he said. "I told her, 'Don't move. I'm coming right over.' On my way there, I couldn't believe it. But I didn't feel good, I felt guilty. I felt like my life was ruined, my whole career was over. When I got to her house, she showed me the ticket and she had the six winning numbers, but they weren't all on the same line. I couldn't believe anybody could be stupid enough not to be able to read a lottery ticket. I told her, 'You really need help.' But I felt enormously relieved. Someone once asked me what my greatest fear is, and I said 'Success.' I'm not sure what success is, but one of the things that come with it is money. If, all of a sudden, this money was dumped in my lap, my career would become secondary. I wouldn't feel an urgency to work. I'm convinced that when people stop working their lives end. When you retire, you lose interest, and the minute you lose interest you might as well die."

I studied Stabile's face as he said this—a slightly pudgy cross between Bruce Willis and John McEnroe, crowned with rapidly thinning light-brown hair—and found myself wondering all over again just how old he really was.

"A lot of people are afraid to admit they don't know what they're doing when they start something new," he continued. "The first time I walked on a film set, I thought I had to know everything, all the answers. I was afraid to let things happen. You understand that I never really expected to be a director. And I certainly didn't learn anything about directing at N.Y.U. Technically, all I knew was there was a camera, there was film, and you put that in the camera. I never knew how to record sound. I didn't know that the clapper on the slate was for synching up the sound. You should see the outtake of the first shot we ever did. You hear the sound guy say 'Speed,' and Joe, the cameraman, says 'Set.' The guy reads the slate, Joe says 'Mark it,' the slate bangs, and then there's silence. Everybody's just waiting for about seven or eight seconds. I go, 'Come on. The camera's running. We're wasting film.' And Joe said, 'You're supposed to call "Action!" ' So we tried it again. I called 'Action!' and everybody started moving." ♦

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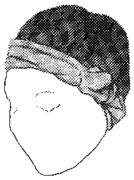

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LETTER FROM JERUSALEM

THE AFTERLIFE

At a time when Israel has been stunned by yet another terrorist bombing and dismayed by an unpopular government, Natan Sharansky has tried to transform himself from an icon into a politician. Is he doomed to failure?

BY DAVID REMNICK

In the Land of Israel, nothing is more telling than the hat on your head. The followers of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Schneerson tend to the felt fedoras once favored by sidemen in the old Ellington orchestra, while the Moroccan Sephardim wear the multicolored embroidered caps that were de rigueur for bebop pianists at The Five Spot. A small knitted *kipa*, or skullcap, signifies the Modern Orthodox Zionist; a slightly greater circumference indicates a settler; a black velvet model is the mark of the ultra-Orthodox and (sometimes, but not always) the anti-Zionist. It is true: to be a discerning Israeli is to be no less an expert in hats than the millinery specialists at Bergdorf's. The really well versed can simply glance at the brim width, the crown height, and the fur type of a passing *shtreimel*—a kind of Hasidic sombrero worn on the Sabbath and on holidays—and identify the particular sect of the Hasid in question, his attitude toward Israel as a state, his income, his fealty to certain texts and chants, and the location of his ancestral village in Ukraine or Poland, Russia or Lithuania.

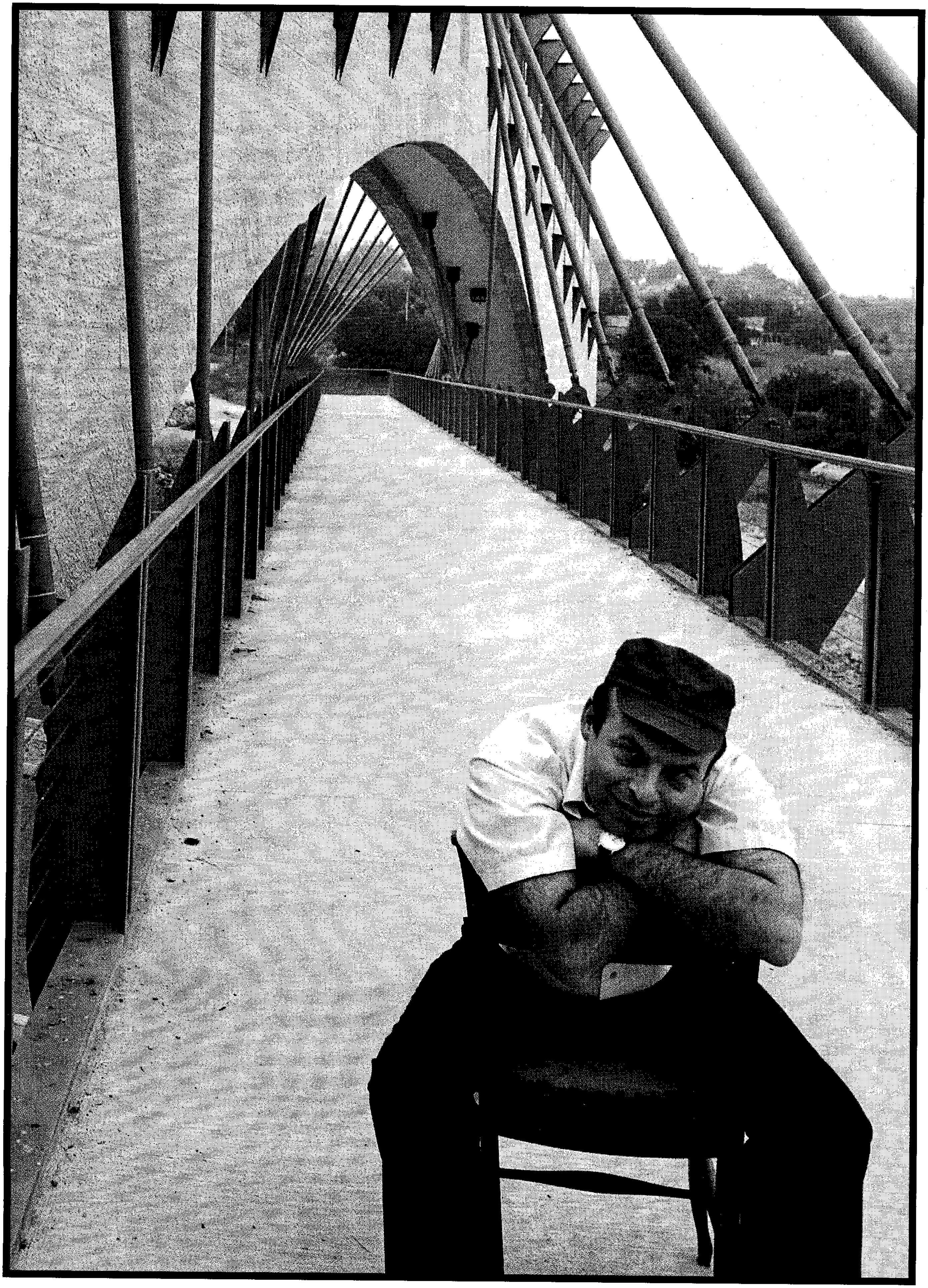
When the Soviet dissident and Jewish activist Natan Sharansky was released from the Gulag and allowed to emigrate to Israel, in 1986, not a few people in the cheering throng at Ben-Gurion Airport were curious to see what he would wear (or not wear) on his pale bald pate. During nine years as a prisoner of the Communist regime, Sharansky had become the emblem of Soviet Jewry, the most desperate realm of the Diaspora. Throughout his imprisonment, his weary and impish face projected the singular image of the persecuted Jew—an image on placards everywhere, at demonstrations outside the United Nations and the White House, outside the Élysée Palace and in Pushkin Square. An entire generation of Jews—in Europe, in Israel, and, most of all, in the United States—had measured its commitment to the postwar slogan "Never Again!" by its commitment to the liberation of the Soviet Jews in general, and Natan Sharansky in particular.

In Mikhail Gorbachev's first months as General Secretary of the Communist Party, he parroted the familiar line on Sharansky, claiming that he, like Andrei Sakharov and other prisoners and internal exiles, was guilty of "anti-Soviet" behavior, of treason. That soon changed. One of Gorbachev's earliest and most important moves to make his peace with the West and seduce the intellectual classes at home was to release Sharansky and, not long after, to end the emigration restrictions on Soviet Jewry. Sharansky fast became the symbol of a historic exodus, Biblical in its scale. Since 1989, more than seven hundred thousand Jews have arrived in Israel from the former Soviet Union. Considering Israel's size, receiving them has been a feat of demographic agility even more impressive than, say, the United States absorbing the entire population of Canada and then making room for every Australian as well. It is hard to know exactly how many Jews are left in the former Soviet Union, but Sharansky says Israel should be prepared to absorb "hundreds of thousands more."

At first, Sharansky could not have been more ignorant of the identity politics of Israel. That is, he knew almost nothing of its hats. As a young dissident in Moscow, and then during his time in the Gulag system, he dreamed of finally getting an exit visa and making *aliyah*—immigrating—to an Israel of "brothers and sisters, a country unified in the essentials." Sharansky was one of many refuseniks who formed within themselves an image of a Promised Land by raking together whatever scraps of information they could find. On the Voice of America he heard half-jammed radio accounts of the Six-Day War. He read "Exodus." He absorbed the fevered, well-meaning descriptions of paradise from visitors from the West. He learned Hebrew in underground classrooms from smuggled textbooks. The refuseniks formed, quite naturally, a romanticized—or, at least, simplified—notion of Israel, a kind of antidote to their day-to-day reality. Even Sharansky's marriage was an episode in romantic Zionism: he married Avital Stieglitz one day and she emigrated the next. At the airport, they made a pledge: "Next year in Jerusalem."

A lot of time has passed since Sharansky's arrival in Israel, but it is still startling to meet with him at his apartment, in the Old Katamon district of Jerusalem. When I was living in Moscow, I got permission to visit Perm-35, in the Urals, which was Sharansky's last prison camp. He had already been free for several years, but I went to his old barracks, his old punishment cell, and met his commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Nikolai Osin, a thick sausage of a man who scowled vermillion when I mentioned Sharansky's name. "There were never any political prisoners here!" Osin told me, and roared with laughter. And so to see Sharansky now, at liberty in Israel, surrounded by his wife and two daughters, by a riot of pink and purple flowers on his porch and the shat-

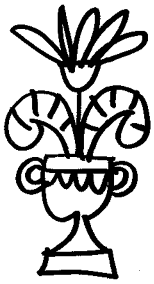
"Natan's not cowed by the fact that he's taking a beating from the circles that adulated him before," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says. Natan Sharansky, photographed by Frederic Brenner in Jerusalem, June, 1997.



tering desert sun and everywhere the pale Jerusalem stone, is—I apologize in advance—a miracle. Somehow he has managed to sustain his life's drama. Sharansky is now a minister in the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, a man he once counted as a dear friend. In the past several months, however, he has found himself in the position of having to decide whether to withdraw his support and bring down the government or to stay in power and risk tarnishing what has been a peerless moral reputation in Israel.

"In prison, when people would ask about Israel there were never any questions about whom you felt closer to, the left or the right, the religious or the nonreligious," Sharansky said. "I never really knew much about this, and when I came I was suddenly besieged with these questions and issues and all the debates, and I had to think about these things. It was completely bewildering."

At first, Sharansky could be forgiven his bewilderment. On February 11, 1986, he began the day as a prisoner of the Soviet Union. K.G.B. guards then flew him to East Berlin, and there he was told to walk across the Glienicke Bridge and into the West. Sharansky had grown so skinny on prison rations that, on worldwide television, his state-issued trousers nearly fell to his ankles as he walked to freedom. By nightfall, he was at the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, carried along on the shoulders of hundreds of jubilant Israelis. At the Wall, he prayed from a tiny Book of Psalms—a gift from Avital. He had been able to keep that book throughout his imprisonment in Lefortovo, Chistipol, and Perm-35. It was his talisman, his communion with the language and his people and his wife. Once Natan was thrown in prison, Avital had spent nearly every day campaigning for his release, and the moment they saw each other again, on the day of his release, Natan said, in Hebrew, "*Slichi le she'icharti k'tsat.*" ("Sorry I'm a little late.") After the initial celebration in Jerusalem, Natan and Avital went to the Galilee for a brief vacation. One morning, Sharansky woke to the fragrance of a blossoming almond tree and the music of Palestine songbirds. He roused his wife and dragged their bed out to the balcony. "Look," he told her, "it's paradise." Nine months after their reunion, their first daughter, Rachel, was born.



But Israel does not permit its saints long honeymoons. Sharansky would have to decide about his public identity—his hat—and much else. Compounding the problem was the fact that, in his absence, Avital had grown close to the religious nationalist group Mercaz Ha'rav. Her circle was, in all ways, conservative. Avital was now a devout Orthodox woman, and covered her head with a scarf. What sort of Israeli would her husband be? The speculation began.

"People were betting on whether I would put on the *kipa* or Avital would take off her scarf, because for Israelis it is impossible to stay in one room together if they haven't got their headgear together," Sharansky said. "This really irritated me. I didn't want to belong to any group. I wanted to belong to all of them together. But when I got out of prison and came to Israel I found very quickly that, while I had joined the greater Israeli people, everyone was in his own cell."

Sharansky carries his iconic status with a sheepish modesty. His vanity lies in his self-regard as a lifelong chess player, as one who can figure his way out of any strategic cul-de-sac. After a great deal of thought, he was convinced he had solved the riddle of the hat. "In 1974, there was a famous underground art exhibition in Moscow that was knocked down with bulldozers by the K.G.B.," he said. "Some foreign tourists had brought me a souvenir—a hat that Israeli soldiers wore. I put it on and almost that very day I found myself at that exhibition fighting against the K.G.B. I felt like a real soldier. I had very sentimental feelings about that hat, but then I got arrested and lost it. So when I got to Israel I put on this hat, thinking, First of all, it's Army; second, it has a sentimental meaning for me; and, finally, let other people break their heads over this. Let them decide what kind of religious or not religious person I am."

The Army hat seemed to solve the identity problem. It represented an allegiance to the singular national institution—the national protector—and, at the same time, it was a particularly schlumpy Army cap, and so it projected a sense of unimportance, as if to say, O.K., I have covered my head, I cannot be accused of complete religious indifference, but I also have a secular, national allegiance, and without being too crazy about it, either. In any case, Sharansky did not tip his hand—or his hat—to any one ideology, religious sect, or community, and he was enormously popular across the political spectrum: an almost impossible feat in fractious modern Israel.

Sharansky's informality worked well for him. When he went to dine with the King of Belgium, he forgot all he had been told about the protocol of the occasion and addressed the King as "Mr. King." Mr. King was charmed. After wearing a tie to visit Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, he dispensed with the constricting garment forever. At the White House, Bill Clinton asked him why he didn't bother with a tie. "We have a special law in Israel," Sharansky said. "For everyone who was in prison more than nine years, they don't have to wear a tie."

For his first ten years in Israel, Sharansky kept his distance from elective politics and focussed mainly on his de-facto leadership of the Russian emigration. This was no small burden. Hundreds of émigrés were arriving every day at Ben-Gurion Airport. To help the new immigrants, Sharansky founded the Zionist Forum, whose mission was to supplement the budget for immigrant absorption and build apartments and create jobs and institutions for the new arrivals. The Forum has raised millions of dollars, much of it from foreign donors.

But a little more than a year ago Sharansky entered the world of elective politics. He had thought about the decision for a long time. Even in a tiny landscape rich with survivors of war and persecution, Sharansky stood out. Was he risking his reputation, his moral authority? But in order to get closer, to exert more influence, he would have to run for parliament. While Sharansky was thinking it all over, his longtime friend Ari Weiss told him, "If you go into politics, you are going to have to forget what I have to say to you now, but listen: You have to realize that in politics your stature is inevitably going to be reduced."

Weiss knew what he was talking about. Before emigrating to Israel, he had worked on Capitol Hill as a key aide to the late Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill.

"Scotch and toilet water?"

• •

Sharansky made up his mind. "I have no doubt that's true," he told his friend, "but stature is of no importance if you don't use it." For the 1996 elections, he helped create a new political party, Israel B'aliyah, which is, first and foremost, the party of the new Russian immigration. The émigrés had first voted for Likud, then for Yitzhak Rabin and Labor, and now in their dissatisfaction they were ready to turn to their own. The Party's leaders are Russian. Its lingua franca is Russian. Its primary interests are the interests of Russian immigration. In nearly all its television and radio advertisements, the Party did not even bother to broadcast in Hebrew.

From the start, Sharansky's politics have been conservative. Like so many Russians raised on Soviet socialism, he holds views of economic policy that tend to the Thatcherite. Largely because he looks through the prism of a Soviet dissident who felt that the West was foolish ever to forge treaties with totalitarian states during the Cold War, he is convinced that Israel must beware of all dealings with the autocrats of the Middle East, including Yasir Arafat. An incident like last week's suicide bombings in west Jerusalem only hardens Sharansky's conviction that the Oslo peace process under the Rabin-Peres Labor governments went too far, too fast, and provided too few guarantees.

Sharansky knew that he could not count on the ardent support of the Israeli left, and yet he was not, and is not, a run-of-the-mill right-winger. First, he has behind him an enormous ethnic constituency. The politics of the new Russians are, above all, about the new Russians. Although the new Russians are reflexively distrustful of a settlement with the Palestinians, their first priority is economic. The Israeli government cannot spend or build fast enough to satisfy the demands of such a huge influx. They need funds for housing. They want jobs that match their remarkably high level of expertise as scientists, mathematicians, academics, doctors, and musicians. The hotels of Israel are still filled with Russian doctors changing the sheets. Sharansky was connected to that community and could rely on its support. He also had support among the sorts of nationalist and settler who saw him as a Zionist hero. He could even count on a few votes among liberals who admired him not so much for the content of his politics as for his character, his honesty, and his wit.

In 1996, for the first time, the electoral system allowed people to vote separately for a party in the Knesset and for a Prime Minister. As a result, the Russians and the Israeli conservatives could vote, say, for the Likud candidate for Prime Minister, Netanyahu, and for the Israel B'aliyah slate—Sharansky's slate—for the Knesset. I also spoke to some Israelis in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa who had voted for the Labor candidate, Shimon Peres, and Israel B'aliyah.

As a politician, Sharansky owes his charisma to his biography and his character. He is a mediocre stump speaker and a less than imposing physical presence. He is quite short, or, as Groucho Marx once said, "well over four feet": about five-three. His Hebrew is, to be charitable, limited in vocabulary and marred by a heavy Russian accent. His English is better than his Hebrew. He is, however, funny and self-deprecating. He has little of the pride-in-suffering seen occasionally in famous dissidents.

When the balloting was over, Sharansky's new party had won seven seats in the parliament and, after the usual bargaining over a coalition government, got two seats in Netanyahu's Cabinet: Minister of Trade and Industry (Sharansky), and Minister of Absorption (Yuli Edelstein, another former political prisoner and a West Bank settler). It was an incredible victory, and totally unexpected, but in no time at all Sharansky had learned the cost of moving from dissidence to neutrality to partisan politics.

"Israeli politics is brutal because the logic of coalition politics is that you have to concede your principles to form a government," Yaron Ezrahi, a prominent political theorist, told me. "Israeli politics demands that. All party leaders cede principles. Sharansky was immediately subject to that cruel logic. He had to play by rules inconsistent with what had made him unique in the first place. In this respect, he was overwhelmed. Here is a guy who took on the Kremlin and won but now has to face the prospect of not being able to survive the warm embrace of Bibi Netanyahu."

ORWELL wrote in his 1949 essay on Mahatma Gandhi, "Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent." Orwell admired Gandhi but was forced to ask himself, "To what extent did he compromise his own principles by entering into politics, which of their nature are inseparable from coercion and fraud?" Nearly every saint who has entered the realm of politics fails—or, at the very least, fails to keep his sainthood under repair. Nelson Mandela is the exception, not the rule.

Sharansky has been an enormous disappointment to many Israelis, especially on the left. For one thing, he has not shown himself to be overly concerned with the human rights of the Palestinians. Sharansky, who helped start Helsinki Watch, the leading human-rights group in the former Soviet Union, has been extremely reticent to speak out even in cases of alleged torture and abuse of Palestinian prisoners. Civil-rights groups, many Laborites, and smaller liberal parties expected a different man, a crusader of another kind. "Sharansky writes in his book about helping other persecuted peoples as part of his own freedom, but in Israel he hasn't lived according to that," said Eitan Felner, the executive director of B'Tselem, a human-rights organization in Jerusalem. "It's like the first Zionists a hundred years ago, who came here as if there were no other people here. It's easy to talk about human rights when it's your own people."

In 1996, there was still great hope for Sharansky as a new politician. Most of the leading media outlets in Israel—two of the three major newspapers, state television, and state-run radio—are inarguably liberal, but Sharansky's triumph did not rankle them the way Netanyahu's did. Perhaps no liberal institution was more sanguine about Sharansky's rise to political power than the staff of *The Jerusalem Report*, the country's leading English-language magazine. A few years after arriving in Israel, Sharansky helped start up the magazine with his friends Hirsh Goodman, a native South African who had been the longtime defense correspondent for the Jerusalem *Post*, and Ze'ev Chafets, an irreverent author and columnist.

At *The Jerusalem Report*, Sharansky was a regular columnist and a moral force. As a reporter, he tagged along with the Army during its secret airlift of Ethiopian Jews out of Addis Ababa and wrote a moving dispatch; he wrote intelligent commentary on the collapse of the Soviet Union and on the problems of the arriving immigrants. Once, in the midst of the Gulf War, he invited the eminent religious scholar Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz to lecture the magazine's reporters and editors on the interpretation of libel laws in the Talmud. While everyone wore gas masks and listened, Steinsaltz spoke about the importance of avoiding *lashon harah*—malicious gossip.

"Natan's message was simple," Goodman told me one morning at the offices of *The Jerusalem Report*. " 'These are your roots. This is how the Talmud relates to slander, and the punishment is tremendous.' It was very illustrative, and it was very illustrative of Natan."

Goodman could not have been closer to Sharansky. Sharansky signed on Goodman's mortgage and was a witness at his wedding. Sharansky was so delighted with what he called "my first day job" that he inscribed a copy of his memoir, "Fear No Evil," "To Hirsh, Who freed me from being a prisoner of Zion." Goodman did not vote for Sharansky—he was convinced that the Russians would end up a "Trojan horse for Bibi"—but he was not displeased that his friend had won.

"*The Jerusalem Report* was great," Goodman said, "but it wasn't his calling. He was destined for national leadership of some kind. Just as Avital's destiny was to fight for his freedom, he saw his destiny as bringing a million Jews in from the former Soviet Union. Natan is a chess player, and that is crucial. He survived in jail by playing chess with the authorities. So in politics he saw that the only way to achieve his agenda is to play chess

"I'm down here temping as George's wife."

again, and Bibi is a piece on the board."

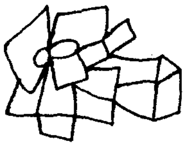
Several months after the election, Sharansky's old friends at *The Jerusalem Report* got a sense that he was fast becoming a rather conventional conservative minister and perhaps the most visible supporter of the West Bank settlers. Netty Gross, a friend and neighbor of Sharansky's, wrote a profile of him for *The Jerusalem Report*. Although the article was mild by the standards of Israeli journalism, Sharansky thought the piece was damaging, and certainly, compared with the worshipful press coverage he had accumulated in his years as a dissident-icon, it was. "Natan has a hard time with criticism," Gross said. "I think he really has to get off this hero business, this you-can't-criticize-me business. It's time for his handlers to tell him that he is part of a government—a government that has to ask its kids to go die for it. I get the impression that criticism is seen as betrayal, and it's not."

Early this year, Sharansky found himself in the center of one of the worst political scandals in the history of the state—the Bar-On affair. Netanyahu, after his election victory, needed to appoint an Attorney General, a job that, under Labor, traditionally went to some liberal jurist from the courts or academe. Netanyahu, who was intent on bucking the Labor establishment, selected a relatively obscure Likud activist and attorney named Roni Bar-On. Bar-On had no great reputation in the law—he was better known as the chairman of Betar Jerusalem, one of the most popular soccer teams in the country—and quit almost immediately. Two weeks later, a journalist for Israeli television reported that, in fact, the Bar-On appointment had been a favor to Aryeh Deri, who was the leader of Shas, the main party of the ultra-Orthodox Sephardim—Jews whose roots are in Morocco and other Muslim countries—and whose continued support was essential to the survival of the Netanyahu government. Deri is on trial for fraud and corruption, but, with his friend Bar-On as Attorney General, the report suggested that he was hoping to win favorable consideration.

The result was nationwide hysteria. The story, in effect, suggested that the Prime Minister had knowingly appointed as his chief law officer a man who might extend his good offices to Aryeh Deri in his time of trouble. The implication was that Netanyahu had cut a deal with the Devil.

Sharansky did not hesitate to respond. "If there is even ten per cent of truth in Israel TV's story," he declared, "this government has no place in continuing to govern."

On April 21st, the Attorney General appointed after Bar-On's resignation, Elyakim Rubenstein, and the state's attorney, Edna Arbel, issued a seventy-five-page report declaring that while there was insufficient evidence to indict Netanyahu, there had been "a real threat to the rule of law."



Netanyahu went on television and said that the Attorney General's report had completely exonerated him. He attacked the news media for trying "to undermine the legitimacy of the government." The Prime Minister had always been critical of the Israeli media, but this attack took on a particularly dark, Nixonian ring. There was not the slightest hint of regret in his words or in his voice.

After making his television statement, Netanyahu went home. At about two in the morning, he met with Sharansky. The two men had been friends for a decade. When the Labor establishment gave Sharansky minimal help in staging demonstrations abroad in the eighties, Netanyahu, as the United Nations representative, was quick to do what he could. Over the years, he and Sharansky had had many private meetings and Sabbath dinners. Usually, Netanyahu would go to the Sharanskys', because he is willing to drive on Saturdays. But in recent months they had grown apart. Netanyahu had been angry when Sharansky did not endorse him in the election campaign (Sharansky preferred to remain neutral, to preserve his party's independence from Likud) and had become even angrier when Sharansky pressed for a more significant Cabinet post than Trade and Industry. Sharansky, for his part, refused to be treated like the obedient protégé. He felt that the government was ignoring promises to his constituency, the Russians. What was more, he had begun to dislike Netanyahu's style as Prime Minister: he found him arrogant, condescending, uninterested in the contrary advice of his elected ministers. And now Netanyahu had been humiliated by Sharansky's "ten per cent" remark. Indeed, even a generous reading of the report on the Bar-On affair made it clear that well over ten per cent of the original television broadcast was true.

Netanyahu knew that Sharansky had it in his power to topple the government. Netanyahu controlled sixty-eight of the hundred and twenty seats in the Knesset. Of the sixty-eight, Sharansky controlled the seven legislators from his party and held sway over four more from an allied party, the Third Way, led by the Internal Security Minister, Avigdor Kahalani. The power to force new elections for both Prime Minister and the Knesset was, and is, in Sharansky's hands.

The two men negotiated for about an hour. In the end, Sharansky decided to back down. He could not bring himself to negate the 1996 election on the basis of a report that called for no indictments. He could not bear to open the way for Labor. Netanyahu, in his relief, promised that he would consult more with his ministers, that he would pay more attention to Russian issues, that he would set up an internal-appointments committee within the Cabinet which would include Sharansky. (Sharansky soon discovered, to his dismay, that the committee was a sham: Netanyahu simply ignored it.)

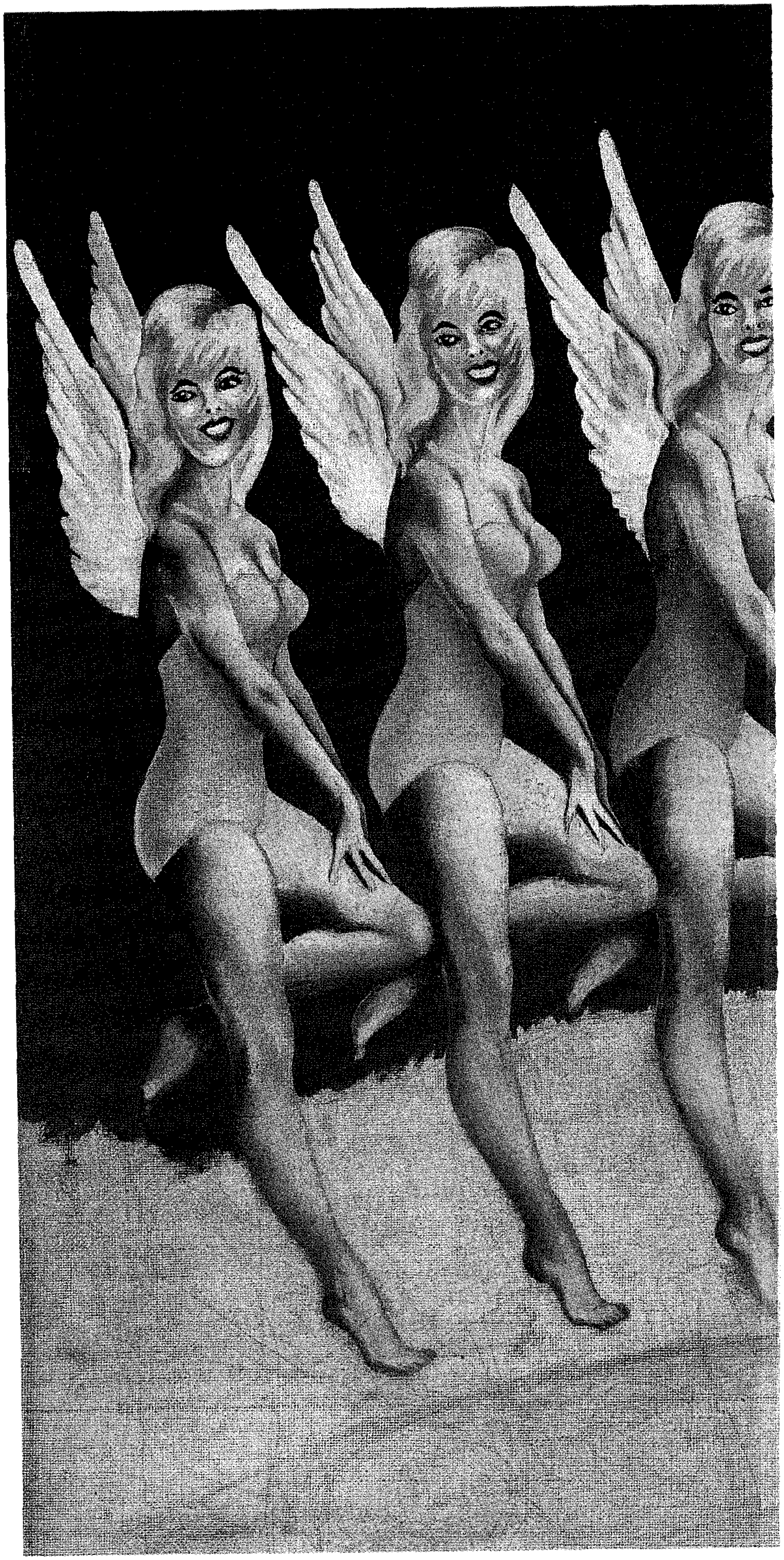
Goodman could not believe that his friend had stayed put. He had always known that Sharansky was a conservative, but now he saw him sticking with a government that surely did not pass the "ten per cent" test. He was also incensed that Sharansky had voted for a new law that would give Orthodox rabbis de-jure control over religious conversions inside Israel—a law that was widely interpreted both in Israel and abroad as delegitimatizing Conservative and Reform Judaism. In his rage, Goodman went to his desk and wrote a column titled "Mr. Ten Percent" for the May 15th issue of *The Jerusalem Report.* "Rumor has it that Natan Sharansky is growing a beard these days," the column began. "Apparently, he can't bear to look at himself in the mirror anymore." Goodman charged that Sharansky had supported a conversion law that effectively disenfranchised half of world Jewry, and had done it only because "his personal political survival depended on his caving in to ultra-Orthodox ultimatums." The reason Sharansky did not move against a corrupt Prime Minister, Goodman wrote, was that the Russian Party was split and was not likely to win seven seats again in new elections. "It is therefore crucial for him that the current government survive and no matter what he may think of Netanyahu personally or his professional performance, he will continue to support him politically," Goodman wrote. "And because Natan Sharansky is essentially a person of principle, who understands better than anyone else that he has become just another cheap politician devoid of any principle other than that of political survival, rumors of his beard may very well be correct."

Goodman did not want to take Sharansky by surprise, so he slipped an advance copy of the column and a personal note into Sharansky's mailbox. The column ended their friendship.

When I went to see Goodman at his office at *The Jerusalem Report*, a few weeks after the column ran, he seemed to wear none of the journalist's customary self-satisfaction after thrusting the lance. "The whole thing pains me," he said. "Recently, I gave a lecture to a Jewish group in Los Angeles, and there were six or seven hundred people there. At the mention of Sharansky's name, they booed! It was like a knife through my heart."

THIS spring and summer have been a thoroughly depressing time in Israel. Netanyahu's government is constantly at war with its opponents and with itself. The peace process, which

POLKE FEST



One of the most influential postwar German artists, Sigmar Polke has been associated chiefly with Capitalist Realism, Germany's answer to Pop. Far more than his American counterparts, he has departed from the conventions of easel painting, making free use not only of commercial iconography but also of such debased means as children's paint and ballpoint pen, frequently on cheap unmounted paper. "Engel" ("Angels"; 1962), one of his earliest mature works and a concise example of his penchant for trash with flash, is part of a large Polke retrospective currently on view at the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle, in Bonn.

COURTESY KARIN POLKE

Netanyahu promised to continue (if with greater caution), has deteriorated. The bombings in the west-Jerusalem market will undoubtedly make serious negotiations almost impossible for weeks, or months, to come. The suspicions and divisions that followed Yitzhak Rabin's assassination linger. When I was driving from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv to meet Sharansky, a newscast reported that fanatic Israeli nationalists had gone to the prison that houses Yigal Amir, Rabin's assassin, to celebrate Amir's twenty-seventh birthday, and had brought bottles of champagne. Such news allowed the left to think the worst of the right.

Sharansky, for his part, was still smarting from the attacks on his integrity and political wisdom by Goodman and many others. Netanyahu, who was at least grateful that Sharansky's ten-per-cent remark had not led to something more disastrous for him, told me, "Natan's not cowed by the fact that he's taking a beating from the circles that adulated him before."

"I wouldn't say what Hirsh wrote was painful. It was just wrong," Sharansky said. "He was saying, 'You are a guy who once had principles and now you have no principles at all. You are a politician who only wants to survive in power and you know that your voters won't vote for you again.' It's bad enough that he doesn't understand my votes, but he doesn't understand me at all. To say of me that I'm a guy who wants only to be in power and that's all—well, he might as well say, 'You are a guy who wants to be seven feet tall and only play basketball.' It's not about me. By the way, I understand it. Hirsh can't stand the Prime Minister. To think that his friend had the ability to bring Bibi down and didn't do it made him angry."

"Will you ever respond to him?" I asked.

"It's not something to respond to," Sharansky said. "Someone tells you that you're a person without principles. What should I do? Say, 'Yes, I do have principles'? I show my principles by my life, and not by arguing about it. There's nothing to talk about. It's as if six years together were nothing. You can spend all that time together and not understand a thing about each other. There's no reason to reconcile. Why reconcile if that's the situation?"

Sharansky's metaphor for nearly everything in life is chess. Perhaps his greatest triumph, next to staring down the K.G.B., was defeating Garry Kasparov last year during a simultaneous match in Jerusalem. ("Natan is a reasonably good club player, and in a simultaneous game that can be dangerous," Kasparov told me. "But he should be pretty decent. He's the product of Soviet chess schools.") In his prison cell, Sharansky played game after game against himself—"and I always won." He approached K.G.B. interrogations as if they were elaborate chess games, complete with wary openings, intricate developments, trade-offs, deceptions, endgames. One afternoon, I went with him to the opening of a chess center outside Tel Aviv sponsored by Kasparov and the Belgian philanthropists Sol and Sissy Mark. As the cameras surrounded Sharansky, the directors asked him to sit down and play a quick game. With anyone.

"Sit down!" Sharansky commanded me.

"Me?"

"You."

Each time Sharansky moved, he slammed his piece down on the board and whacked the clock. A thin stream of sweat started on the back of my neck. I lasted fourteen moves and considered it a triumph. The scene was broadcast that night on national television.

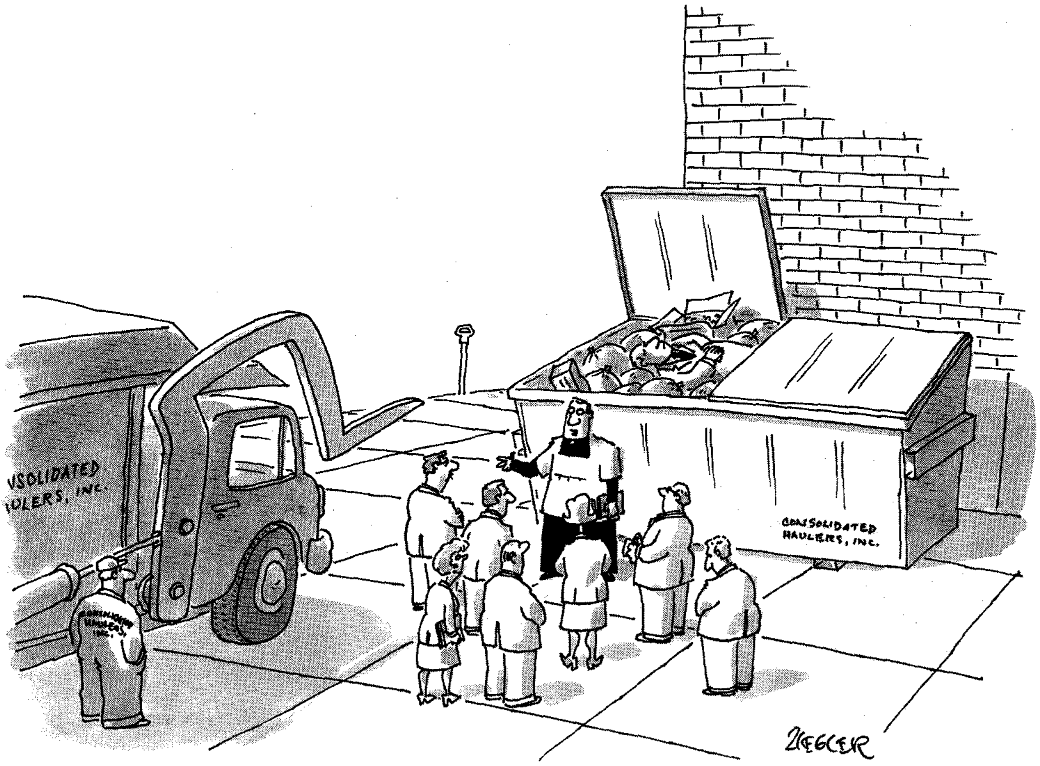
"For me, chess was always a great game, which helps to give life a frame, but it was never life itself," he told me later. "But, if there is something that is truly irritating about politics, it's that too often for the players the game is not just the means but the essence. It becomes difficult to concentrate, and you have to make constant efforts to remind yourself what you are here for. Frankly speaking, I'm not enjoying politics at all. But, you know, as long as you feel that you have some aims you want to achieve and you are moving in this direction, then you know what you're doing it for. Look, I didn't want to be a prisoner of conscience, either. But, once I did it and understood why I was doing it, I had to go forward."

To critics who felt that Sharansky was trying to have his integrity and his power, too—threatening to exert his moral and political power and then withdrawing for the sake of saving his seat in the Knesset and in the Cabinet—he said, "That's all nonsense. For me, it was not a matter of the left coming to power or the present government staying in. For me, it's whether I have the moral right to cancel the results of the last elections. Was there enough reason to do it? . . . If I were a real politician, I probably shouldn't have made the ten-per-cent statement. But I don't feel that it was wrong or even bad, or that I lost. . . . There was no criminal proof. . . . As one who knows very well the difference between suspicion and proof, I felt it was not."

In his ministry office, Sharansky hung a portrait of his "higher authority"—Andrei Sakharov, his mentor in the Soviet human-rights movement. The portrait is there as a reminder of Sakharov's example: his honesty, the purity of his intentions and of his language. "His expression was like a saint's—straight, pure, clear moral thought," Sharansky said. "This connection of simplicity and directness with his greatness, it was from the heavens. It was a very strange feeling, which I have practically had with no one else. So it's important to always remind myself that the distance from the heavens to the earth is very close and it all depends on you how close it will be. That is what that picture on my wall reminds me of all the time."

OLD KATAMON, where the Sharanskys live, was an Arab neighborhood until the rise of the state, in 1948, and the first Israeli-Arab war. The architecture is in the Arab style or, as with the Sharanskys' building, newer imitations of the Arab style. Unusual for Jerusalem, the area is mixed—religious and secular; there are cars on the street on Shabbat—but it is, in the main, well-to-do. Real-estate values have climbed so rapidly during the recent boom economy that one of the Sharanskys' neighbors figures their apartment is worth around three-quarters of a million dollars.

Sharansky lives well by Israeli standards. Shortly after he left the Soviet Union, he signed a book contract with Random House for a million dollars. The book, "Fear No Evil," is an account of the subtle war between the political prisoner and his jailers. It did not, however, sell as well as the publisher had hoped, mainly because when it came out, in May, 1988, Ronald Reagan was making nice with Mikhail Gorbachev in Red Square. The frisson of the Cold War was fast becoming a memory. "Random lost a lot of money," Peter Osnos, Sharansky's editor, recalls. "But, as Natan said to me, 'I know this was a dreadful disappointment to you, but it made it possible for me not to bend.' It enabled him to have a life."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"Eddie was a simple man and, in the end, an eminently practical one."

Sharansky can walk into an elevator and people will begin to cry, to tell him how they read his book, how he changed their lives. He certainly could have become wealthy speaking at Hadassah luncheons and synagogue dinners from Oahu to Brooklyn Heights, but he did not. There are other Russians entering the realm of power politics (Yuli Edelstein; Avigdor Lieberman, Netanyahu's closest aide; Eduard Kuznetsov, a former dissident, who is the editor of the newspaper *Vesti;* and Larissa Gershtein, an influential member of the Jerusalem city council), but, in the words of one Israeli journalist, "In the new Russian power élite, Natan and Avital are the tsar and tsarina."

While I was in Jerusalem, Israeli television broadcast a two-hour episode of "Hayim Sheka'elah," a kind of "This Is Your Life," devoted to the Sharanskys. Friends, colleagues, and admirers from all over the country and abroad gathered in a studio for six hours of taping. Both Sharanskys later told me that, while they were grateful for all the praise, finally the marathon rehash was tedious. "It's the past, and we have had another life for ten or eleven years," Avital told me one afternoon on the terrace of their apartment. "For years and years, I spent all my time talking about Natan and his case and our past in Russia. It's already boring to go on and on. You want to live." The only time that the past seems worth thinking about anymore is when they hold their "second seder," every February, commemorating Sharansky's arrival in Israel—an occasion for their two daughters to probe into their parents' story.

By all accounts, the Sharanskys have an extraordinarily close marriage, but the differences between them are also fairly clear. Natan attends synagogue only sporadically; in rare cases, out of the presence of Avital, he has been known to eat without maximal regard for the laws of kashruth. The Army cap was a means of satisfying not only the nation of Israel but also his wife. His gratitude to her is boundless. Avital, a shy woman by nature, had waged the most public of campaigns. A friend of mine recalls going to a bar mitzvah in Montreal and watching as Avital seized the occasion to make an impassioned plea for the Soviet Jews. In fact, Avital hoped not only for her husband's release but, secondarily, for her own release from a public life.

"Just before Natan got out of the Soviet Union, Avital told me that all she wanted to do in the world was darn Natan's socks and change diapers for their babies," David Bar-Illan, a friend of the family and Netanyahu's press spokesman, said. "When they finally came to Israel, they went north to Safed in the Galilee for a few days of vacation. I remember my wife came out of the bathroom at the hotel with tears in her eyes because she had looked out and seen Natan's socks and Avital's stockings drying side by side in the window. She had never forgotten what Avital had said."

Where Natan is rational, Avital is mystical, their closest friends say. Where he is merely wary of compromise with the Palestinians, she is adamantly against it. While Sharansky is capable of spending a long night at blues clubs in New York with his friend Ze'ev Chafets, Avital long ago exhausted her curiosity about the world of glitz. When the Sharanskys were invited to Buckingham Palace to visit the Royal Family, Avital consulted a rabbi, and they concluded that there really was no sufficient reason to go.

There was Zionist feeling on Natan's side of the family, but Avital's parents were true believers, products of the Communist regime. She and her late brother, Mikhail Stieglitz, were their opposites, anti-Soviet rebels from a young age. "I left my parents so early. I ran away and never came back," Avital said. "We were so different. At the end of my mother's life, we brought her here, and she stayed for three months,

WmHamilton

"That's enough therapy. From here on out, I think I could do a hell of a lot more for both of us as your agent."

until she died, but she was so sick I don't really know if she even recognized us. I know my own children will rebel, but we are in Israel, and there will not be such a terrible gap."

The greatest influence on Avital's life in Israel has been the followers of the late Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook, the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Palestine. A messianic Zionist, he believed that God had given Jews what would later be known as "greater" Israel—a territory that would certainly take in the occupied West Bank. The Kookists were among the first Israelis to propound a religious-political interpretation of the Bible, and their influence began to grow under the leadership of Kook's son, Zvi Yehuda, following the Six-Day War, in 1967.

During her campaign for her husband, Avital possessed a valiant glamour. A feature story in the Washington *Post* went as far as to call her the Audrey Hepburn of the Soviet Jewry movement. In Israel, she has withdrawn completely from public life. She has adopted the earnest, plain look of Mercaz Ha'rav women: long skirts, a scarf, a heaviness of bearing. She is kind and pleasant, but she also has about her a messianic air. When I asked her what she thought about the state of American Jewry, she said, "American Jews were tremendously helpful in saving Soviet Jews, and I think that cause was an enormous bridge between Soviet Jews and American Jews—it's as if they were cemented together by fate. But I hope after the Soviet Jews are saved that American Jews will save themselves and come to Israel. There is no life there. This is just who I am, but I just feel that way, in the sense of all the assimilation. They are not living fully. I have had the experience of not being in Israel, and I know that by their not being here they lose something of themselves. It's not real life. It's just spending time. It might be luxurious, it might even be interesting, but real life is when you have your own place and you are with your own people and you have your own way of life and are not worried that your children will become something else." Then she stopped herself and said, "Please, I don't want to offend anyone through this. It's just one Israeli housewife's opinion."

In replying to the same question, Natan was at pains to be more diplomatic. When we met a few days after I talked with Avital at the apartment, he said that, while he saw the "richness" in various American Jewish communities and would never presume to issue a call for mass *aliyah*, "I do feel that if you really want to be an active part of Jewish history, if you want to build the future of the Jewish people, then your place is in Israel. This is the place where you always feel that you are in the middle of things. . . . Here the life is much more meaningful. But to say that life in America is empty—I wouldn't say that."

THE historical importance of Netanyahu's victory over Shimon Peres and the Labor government may well depend less on the policies and treaties Netanyahu enacts and more on the demographic and psychological shift in Israeli politics that he embodies. When I talked with him, he did not seem especially eager to expand on his relationship with Sharansky (they were still feuding). On one point, however, he did keep hammering away: he feels he has paid a price for attacking the Ashkenazi élite, the Jews with roots in European countries. "I had a visit not long ago from the dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, who told me the intellectual climate here is not Bolshevik but Menshevik," the Prime Minister said. "Have you read Paul Johnson's book 'Intellectuals'? It's an interesting expression of the distance people feel from the regnant intellectuals. That's what happened here."

In the coastal cities like Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Hertseliya, and even in some neighborhoods of Jerusalem, there are still plenty of (hatless) Israelis who work in high-tech jobs, learn English and European languages, vote Labor, slowly reconcile themselves to a Palestinian state, and, in general, hope that Israel will gradually lose its eternal sense of imperilment and exceptionalism and become, at long last, a wealthy state, secure, pluralistic, and, perhaps, more ordinary. But while Western visitors and reporters are invariably drawn to that accessible sector of Israeli society, and while those voices still dominate journalism, literature, and the arts, the country is clearly becoming more religious, more Middle Eastern, and less European. Birth rates, for example, are far higher in the religious and Sephardic communities than among the secular Ashkenazim who have dominated the scene since the founding of the state. The writer Ze'ev Chafets is exaggerating only slightly when he says that Israel has become, in a sense, a divided state: the secular, coastal state, with Tel Aviv as its capital, and the religious state of "Judea," with Jerusalem as its capital. The choice now, he says, is whether one wants to be a modern Israeli or a three-thousand-year-old Jew. In the 1996 elections, the "Judeans" won by a whisker.

"For people like me and my friends, it's almost the end of the world," Danny Rubenstein, a well-known liberal journalist on Arab-Israeli affairs, told me one afternoon at the greatest of all establishment meeting places, the veranda of the King David Hotel. "This new wave is totally against our values," he went on. "We were brought up to work, and the new people, especially the ultra-Orthodox, do not make work a value at all. They think that all my kids know or care about is MTV. They are like the Moral Majority. Their ideal for their children is that they become yeshiva students. They say to us, 'Give us lots of money, and we'll study in yeshivas and return the country to its basic values.' And we say, 'We'll give you billions, but not to study Cabala.'

"The ultra-Orthodox treat us like goyim, with such contempt. They don't serve in the Army, they don't care that we die. They don't even respect us. On Memorial Day, a siren goes off and everyone is supposed to stop and come out into the streets and be silent. They deliberately keep on walking. Maybe Israel is changing to some kind of Ayatollah regime, some kind of coalition in which the leaders are ultra-Orthodox. My kids will never live in Jerusalem. Jerusalem to them is like Borough Park or Crown Heights."

The resentments on the other side are, of course, equally vehement. The ultra-Orthodox feel they have been stereotyped, mocked, as if all of them were as fanatical as the assassins of Rabin and of the Arabs at the Cave of the Patriarchs. The Sephardim have long felt left out of the Israeli élite: their income rates and their representation in the professions, business, the media, and big-time politics are much lower on the average than those of the Ashkenazim. Like Menachem Begin before him, Netanyahu campaigned as the champion of the non-élites: the Sephardim, the ultra-Orthodox, the settlers on the West Bank. But while the Ashkenazic secular community may still be at the center of Israel's high-tech economic explosion, its members are suffering the same sense of self-doubt and decline as the American Wasp. "It turns out that we, the old Ashkenazi—the secular community, especially—are the dinosaurs," Avishai Margalit, a professor of philosophy at Hebrew University, said. "We lack identity and vitality. The vitality is in the other communities. But it's not the end of life. It's the end of a species—the species of Zionist propaganda and Jewish Agency posters. This is a country of immigrants, so you have to be ready for what comes."

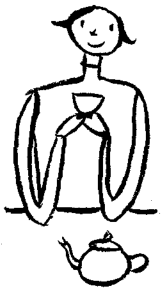
Among the Ashkenazim, the sense of loss can be fierce, as with Rubenstein, or resigned, as with Margalit, but it is distinct. For that reason, the prospect of the arrival of a mass Ashkenazic diaspora—the Russian Jews—was thrilling, especially to the old élite. The Russians represented not only the European Jews who had survived the war but also a revival, of sorts. And yet, when Sharansky was released from prison and arrived in Israel, he was shocked and offended to discover that the country's leadership was skeptical about the prospect of a Soviet exodus.

"We had many conversations, with Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir and with all leaders," Sharansky said. "Our estimation was then that four hundred thousand could come as a first big wave of immigration. It was difficult for people to believe. Of course, they figured that a person who has just come from prison still lives in a dream world. Peres felt that the Soviet Union always had such great potential, but because of a rigid Communist system couldn't use all its socialist potential. But now Gorbachev was making this a free country and a great country. 'And look,' he told me, 'now, with Gorbachev, Jews will be able to live as free Jews. Why would they leave? Of course, we have to attract them—or, at least, be friends.' But he was 'realistic.' Shamir was more skeptical. He felt that the Russians would not really be free, but if they were finally free they would all go to America. Why should they be interested in Israel?"

A COUPLE of times a month, Sharansky gets in the back seat of a government-issued white Volvo and covers as much ground in one day as he can. He invited me along on one of his journeys, and we visited a newly expanded city north of Tel Aviv called Yokneam; a series of Druze villages; and, in Haifa, the Technion, Israel's equivalent of M.I.T. or Caltech. Like a good politician, he sat through one interminable meeting after another, showed fantastic interest during every tour of a factory or housing project, made dozens of phone calls from the car, and ate more baklava than was probably good for him. Sharansky's knowledge of the intricacies of trade and industry began at about zero; he relies heavily on his staff. His more exact role is to delegate the detail work of the Ministry to the experts and concentrate most of his efforts on his greater goal: to accelerate the passage of three-quarters of a million Russians into the mainstream of Israeli life. It is, as it happens, an immensely difficult job.

At first, and even now, tremendous resentment has been directed toward the Russians. It is a truism that all Israelis are agreed in their adoration of *aliyah* and their equally ardent suspicion of the *olim:* that is, they love immigration; it's the immigrants they aren't too crazy about. Russians are thought to be, alternately, snobbish and low-rent. There is resentment directed against the influx of so many musicians, scientists, and professors, and resentment, too, against bleached-blond women who are all, no doubt, prostitutes, and Mercedes-driving men, who are all, no doubt, mafiosi. Groups like the Moroccans, who have been less successful than many other groups, see the Russians getting enormous breaks on apartments and wonder why they didn't get the same treatment upon their arrival, in the fifties.

The Ashkenazi élite, on the other hand, find the Russians presumptuous, unwilling to follow the normal pattern of immigration, in which the first generation suffers its privations humbly and quietly and clears the way for the second. It does not go unnoticed, either, that as many as thirty per cent of the new Russian immigrants were not born Jewish. "We also don't understand their attachment to literature and culture. The notion that any book other than the Bible could have such a hold on them is weird," Eetta Prince-Gibson, an American émigré and journalist, said. "Plus, they're not begging to be a part of us, and that's insulting. Also, there's that heaviness about them. They whine. There's that Russian style of speaking that makes us crazy, like a child whining. Israelis are used to the idea that for the first generation immigration is tough. So Israelis are tough about whining. It gets under our skin that Russians think that the society we've created is not so great."



Most Israelis will admit that the Russians are learning Hebrew quickly and have been willing to take jobs well below their qualifications. What irritates them, however, is a certain sense of immediate entitlement and, at the same time, a disconnection from Israel as a Zionist enterprise, as a cause. "The idea that the Russian *aliyah* is consciously related to the Zionist movement is, alas, a myth," Mikhail Grobman, the best-known Russian artist in Israel, told me. "An essential thing to remember about this immigration is that these Russians came here with no real choice. Most of them would just as soon have gone to the States or to Western Europe, but those places are essentially sealed off from them. Culturally, Soviet man brings with him an expectation of the state as a milk cow, and this causes problems. This doesn't disappear the moment you arrive at Ben-Gurion Airport."

On the road tour, Sharansky met with a group of Russian scientists at the Technion. Led by the eminent scientist Valentin Fainberg, they all complained bitterly that they were getting tiny salaries, the worst laboratory equipment, and no access to scientific conferences. "Our situation is the situation of slaves!" one of the scientists cried out.

Sharansky has heard such complaints a thousand times. And, while he sympathizes with the Russians, he also knows that it is natural for the existing scientific establishment to want to guard its positions rather than open them up to competition. He was more encouraged when we visited the town of Yokneam, which had once been centered on an outdated metallurgical plant and is now a high-tech boomtown in the making. Hundreds of new apartments have been built to house Russian immigrants who will work in software firms and medical-technology companies. The local officials fawned on Sharansky, and that pleased him mightily.

"A year ago, in the best of circumstances, the head of the local population would have been invited for a five-minute meeting, if at all, to give his report, and then he'd be asked to leave, so that the more serious guys could discuss everything," he said. "It was my idea that in order to make integration immediate we have to sit at the table where decisions are made, and the only way to do this is to have political power."

In many ways, the Russian immigration resembles the German influx of the thirties. The populations have much the same profile: well educated, largely professional, and a threat to the Old Guard. "Every new immigration is like a heart transplant," Shimon Peres, the former Prime Minister, told me. "The heart has an extremely difficult time getting used to life in a new existing body. I remember when the German Jews came to Israel. The way we received them was shameful. I remember at school we behaved shamefully to the new German students. We told them they had to brush the teeth of the cows! It was awful."

The Germans had nowhere near the numbers of today's Russians, but they, too, started a political party—Aliyah Hadasha (New Immigrant Party), which was a kind of Central European liberal party. The Germans played a key role in helping to modernize the *yishuv*, the nascent Jewish state before 1948. As that population melted into Israeli society, the Party disappeared. Eventually, the Germans joined the Israeli élite.

"Our idea is much the same," Yuli Edelstein, Sharansky's colleague in the Knesset and in the Cabinet, said. "The idea is to maneuver hundreds of thousands of us into the Israeli mainstream as quickly as possible. Who knows? We might even improve the country in the process."

There are those in Israel, especially on the right, who have grown disenchanted enough with the Netanyahu government to begin thinking about another standard-bearer. Possibly a Russian.

"Look, I never wanted to be a prisoner of Zion," Sharansky said. "I never wanted to be a member of the Knesset. And I don't want to be Prime Minister. I wanted only to be an international chess champion. Life just didn't work out that way. At each step, fate dictated what I had to do and what was demanded of me. So, if I won't have to, I won't be Prime Minister."

This is what was once known in the Nixon years as a nondenial denial. In Sharansky's language of chess, it sounds like an opening.

IN 1992, the Israelis invited Gorbachev to the country. There was a dinner in his honor at the President's residence. The Sharanskys were there and, like everyone else at the dinner, they stepped up to the receiving line to meet the former Soviet leader.

When it was Natan's turn, he said, "I'm glad to greet you, Mr. Gorbachev, on the same side of the barricades."

Gorbachev began to say something about Sharansky's "good works" in Russia and added, "You know, the first time I heard about you was 1985, during a summit meeting with Reagan in Geneva."

"Oh, yes," Raisa Gorbachev said. "Sharansky. The first time I heard about you was in 1985, when your wife was demonstrating for you."

"And here she is," Natan said, introducing his wife.

Avital had actually been arrested in Geneva, after she tried to pass a letter to Raisa Gorbachev that said, "Think about me when your husband comes home, or when you are playing with your children. Think about how I cannot be with my husband, how I have no children, because of how unjustly my husband has been imprisoned." The Gorbachevs, obviously, were playing dumb. Gorbachev had been on the Politburo that ruled while Sharansky was in prison.

When they returned to their table, Natan was (typically) amused and Avital was (typically) steamed. "It's all lies!" she muttered. "Once, when he was in London with a delegation, he was asked about Sharansky, and said, 'He's a spy!' It's all lies!"

Sharansky will never do anything in Israel to match the drama of his arrival. There is even the fear that his work as a middling Minister of Trade and Industry diminishes him. Recently, the newspaper *Ma'ariv* gave him low grades as a Cabinet minister. "There is a sense of loss, a loss of that original purity," Yaron Ezrahi, the political theorist, said. "But I suspect that Sharansky the mediocre minister cannot destroy Sharansky the icon. The minister is too weak, the icon too strong." Sharansky, for his part, shows no sign of wanting to be a curator of his own outsized image.

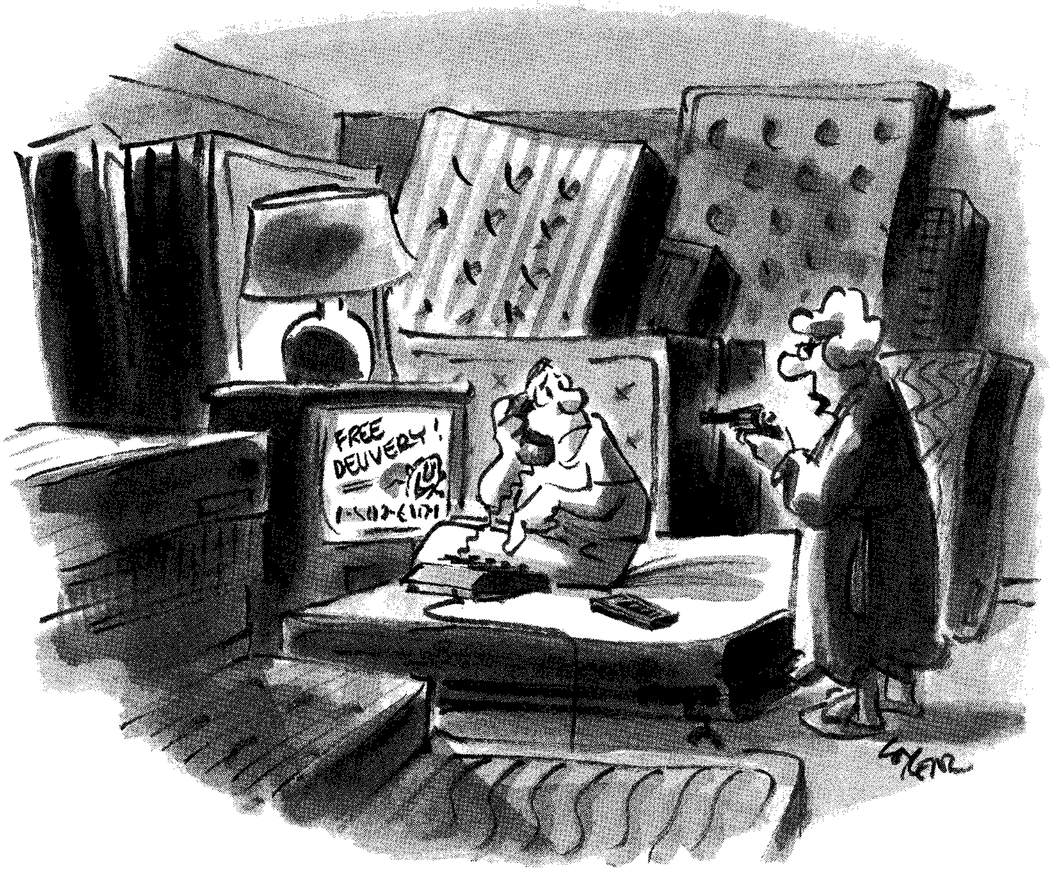
Even now, however, Sharansky is capable of the inspired, dramatic gesture. Last winter, he returned to Moscow for the first time since the K.G.B. drove him to the airport, in 1986. Upon landing at Sheremetyevo, Sharansky had a moment of supreme satisfaction. "When I was in prison, I often dreamed of landing in Israel in an El Al plane—always an El Al plane—and being met there by my wife, Avital, and her brother Misha," he said. "But I never dreamed of landing in Moscow in an El Al plane."

Avital felt no sense of triumph. She hadn't even wanted to make the trip. "I don't have anyone there," she said. "Friends come here. Also, I don't feel any identification with this place—no nostalgia at all. But Natan pressed. When we landed, it was upsetting. All the snow and the ice—it brought back feelings of being young and being cold, it awakened unpleasant memories. There was something about it, kind of like when people go to Auschwitz and somehow swear they can hear the sounds of the past, the screams. When we were at the Moscow synagogue, in the eyes of my spirit I saw all the people we used to know, talking and laughing. It was a really spiritual experience."

The Sharanskys met with politicians and Jewish groups. They drank the ritual coffee around the ritual kitchen table with old dissident friends. They visited Sakharov's grave. They visited the grave of Natan's father, on the outskirts of the city. (The tombstone reads, "His soul will sleep in peace. His seed will inherit the Land of Israel.")

The pivotal moment of the trip, however, came when the Sharanskys visited Lefortovo, where Natan was first imprisoned and interrogated. Sharansky joked that ten years of labor camp had been the best preparation for ten years of Israel, and that his party's campaign slogan was "We Go to Prison First, Then the Knesset." But it was a serious trip, even an essential one. The prison had obviously been cleaned up for the occasion, and when Sharansky asked to see his old punishment cell, in the solitary-confinement area, the officials eyed each other sheepishly and said that they no longer had punishment cells—that things had changed. Hadn't he heard? The punishment cells were now used for "storage." Sharansky did not believe them and, in diplomatic language, said so. The officials were shamed, and relented.

"The cells in Lefortovo were tiny and cold, some of the worst," Sharansky said. "When they brought us to the cell, I asked them to leave my wife and me alone. I tried to describe what it was like. I told her how you take a cup of hot water and put it on spots all over your body to warm up in the cold. There is a tiny stool in the middle of the cell, and you can only sit for a few minutes at a time. For me, it was such a symbolic moment. I'd spent so many days sitting in the punishment cell just thinking about my wife in Israel, and then to think that almost exactly twenty years after my arrest you come here, where they threatened me, where they talked about putting me to death, where they read me testimony of foreign correspondents who supposedly betrayed me . . . That was the most difficult thing. And to think that since that time one million people have left this big punishment cell—the Soviet Union—where the K.G.B. had been looking in. And the regime doesn't even exist anymore! I realized it then, how much we had all survived, and how in the end this cell was the scene of my greatest victory." ♦



"That's it, Henry—you've dialled your last mattress!"

THE ART WORLD

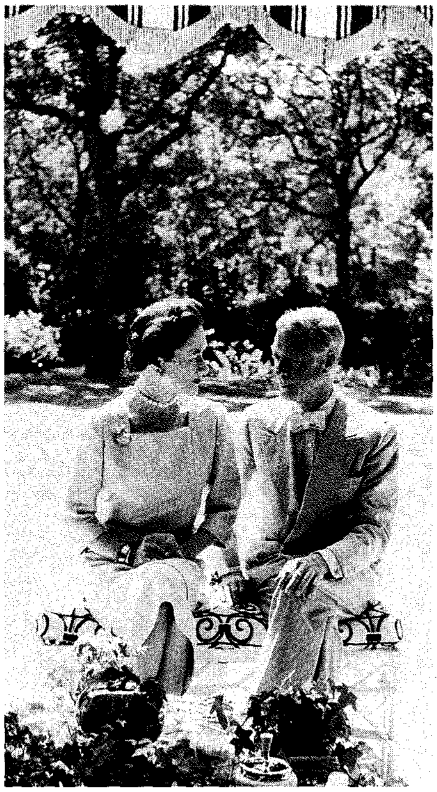
LOVE FOR SALE

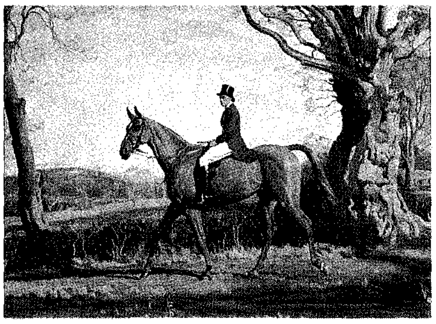
In the years after the abdication, the Duke of Windsor and the woman for whom he gave up the throne went to live in France. Now the possessions from their houses—in Paris and the Chevreuse valley—are going on the block.

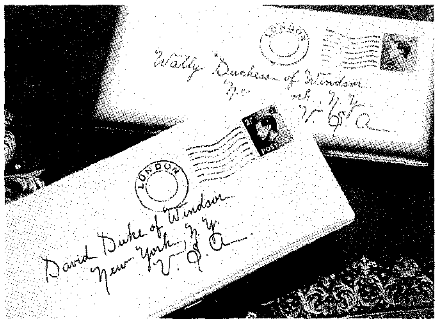
BY CALVIN TOMKINS

“GOD BLESS W E,” the note reads, on a piece of slightly crumpled stationery from Belton House. “W E” as in Wallis and Edward, soon to be together at last, trapped for all time in the long, sad aftermath of the century’s No. 1 celebrity love affair. The note—the rest of it reads, “Good night / From Her to Him / the gardenia,” and it comes with an envelope containing dried gardenia petals—is Lot 39 in the catalogue for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor sale at Sotheby’s New York next month, and its estimated price is between a thousand and fifteen hundred dollars. Sotheby’s is probably lowballing it, to encourage first-time auction buyers. The house may have fallen behind Christie’s lately in the race for major collections, but it is still way ahead when it comes to celebrity auctions, and this one may well top last year’s thirty-five-million-dollar Jacqueline Onassis sale. More than forty-four thousand objects are to be disposed of, in eighteen sessions spread over nine days (from the eleventh of September to the nineteenth), and just about every one of them reeks of that indefinable fragrance called “association value.”

Does anyone still lust to associate with the Windsors? If not, Sotheby’s is in big trouble, because very few of those forty-four thousand items would be worth great sums on their own. Much of the eighteenth-century French furniture went to Versailles after the Duchess died, in 1986. Her expensive jewelry was sold by Sotheby’s in 1987, for close to fifty million dollars; the best of the English silver that the Duke inherited from his forebears was dispersed in the years after *he* died, in 1972. What remains is the contents of their Paris house, on the edge of the Bois de Boulogne, and some things from the Moulin de la Tuilerie, their country seat, in the Chevreuse valley. Chairs, carpets, china, linens, clothing, clocks, prints and drawings, ten thousand photographs (including an album of their wedding pictures by Cecil Beaton), love letters and private papers, sporting trophies, military regalia, trunks and suitcases, books, ceremonial swords, the Chippendale table on which the Duke signed the Instrument of Abdication, and a mind-boggling accumulation of miscellaneous objects of every conceivable kind—letter openers, vermeil boxes, cigarette cases, seals, pipes and pipe racks, three golf balls in metal mounts commemorating the Duke’s three holes in one, two bathroom scales (hers by Continental Scale Works, his by Health-O-Meter), umbrellas and parasols, commemorative cups and mugs, handbags, buttons and waistcoat studs, two sets of used (by the Duke) golf clubs, two squash racquets with broken strings, and on and on and on and on.



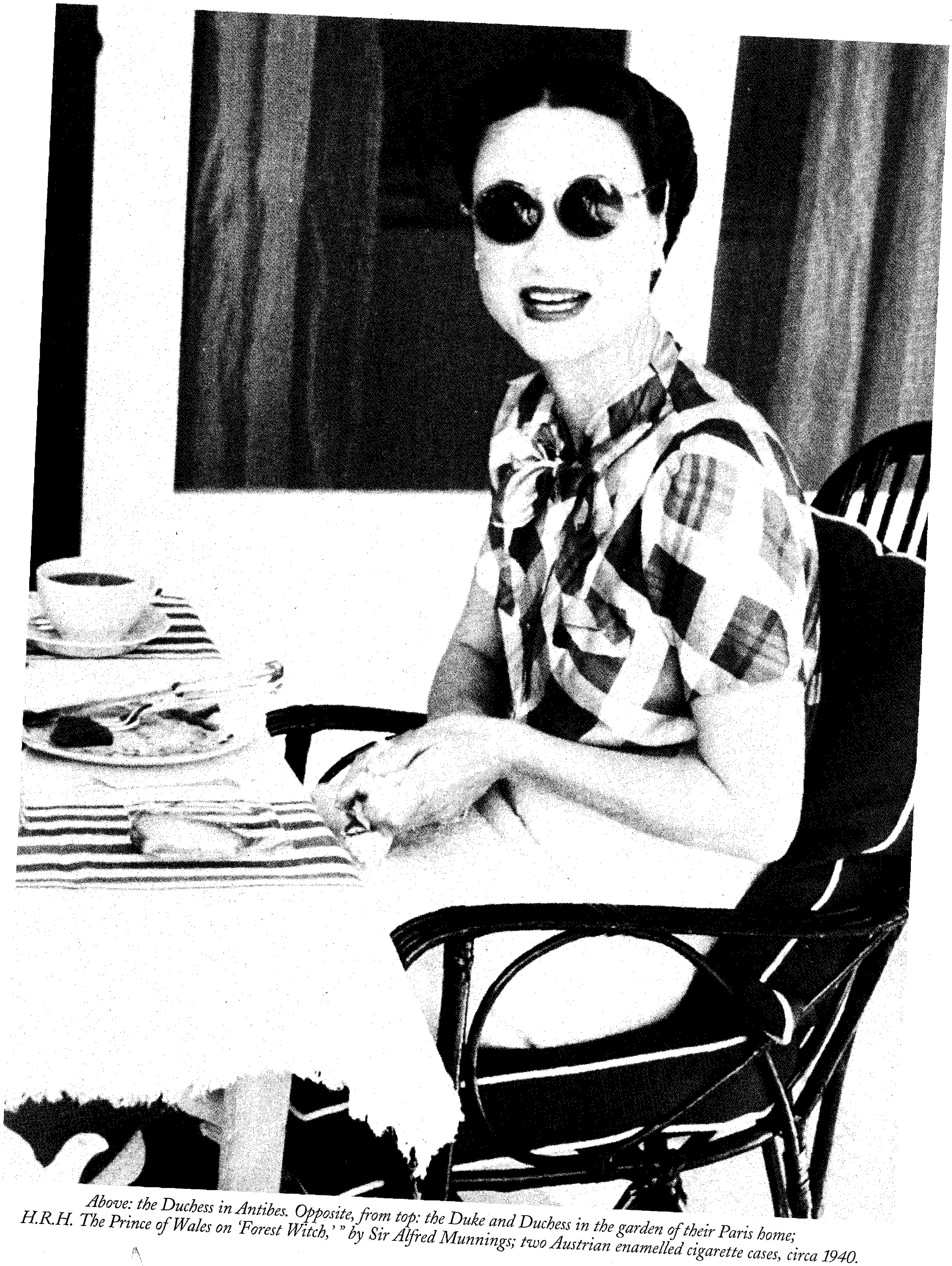




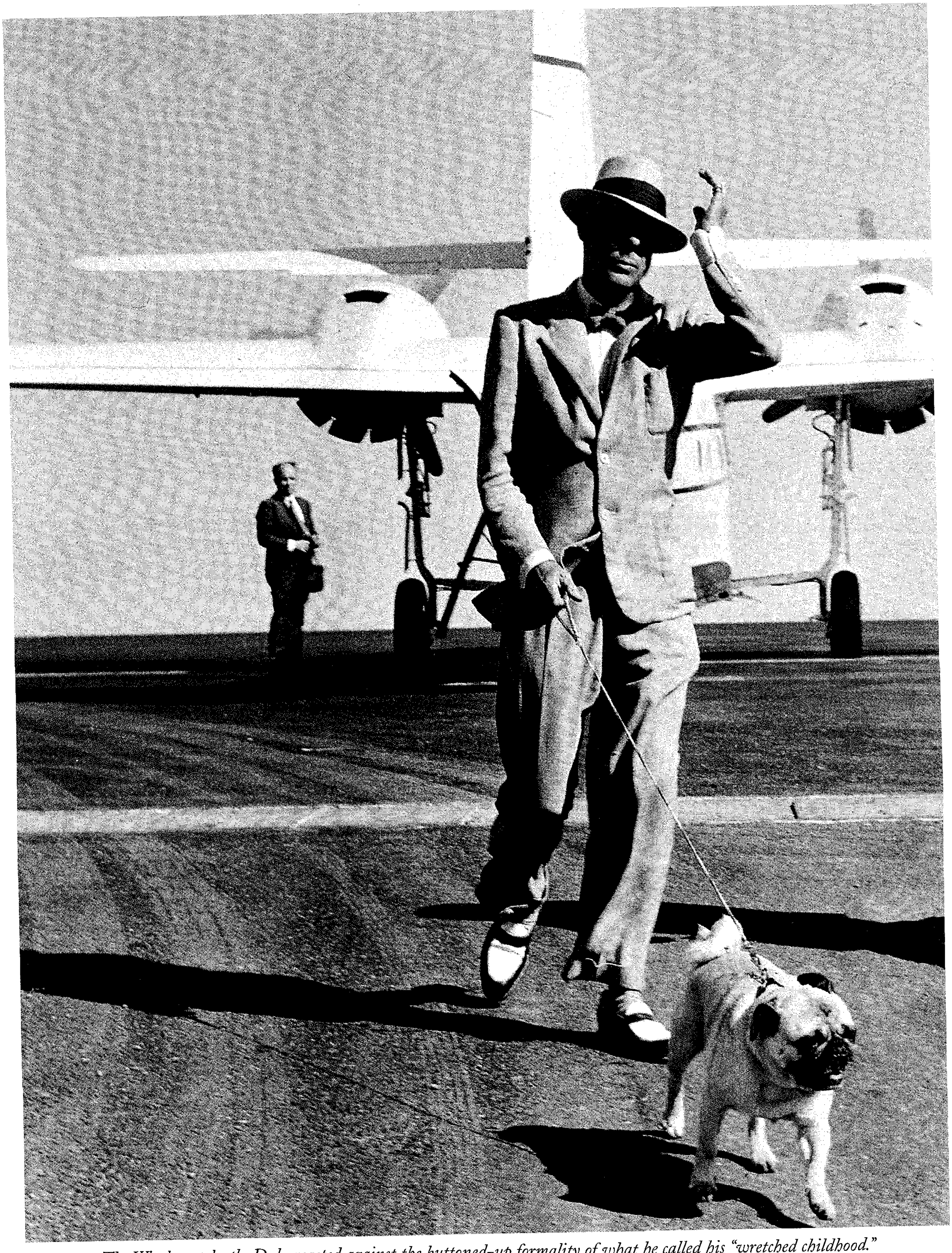
TOP PHOTO: CAMERA PRESS

There are a few unmemorable paintings—a Degas landscape, a Utrillo still-life, a Warhol flower painting (given to the Duchess by the artist, one celebrity to another)—and a host of still-lifes by a chic, forgotten Frenchman named Fernand Renard. There are also sporting prints, decorative watercolors, and many, many images of pug dogs, with portraits of the favorites among the Windsors’ continually replenished menagerie posing on silk cushions. Pugs were everywhere in this childless household—pug sculptures in porcelain and metal, pug pillows, pug medallions, the word “PUGS” embroidered on bedsheets (the real ones slept on a plastic sheet on the Duchess’s bed), and legions of pug photographs. Each pug had its own silver-plated bowl to eat from, and these bowls, too, can be knocked down to your pet, for between five and seven hundred dollars.

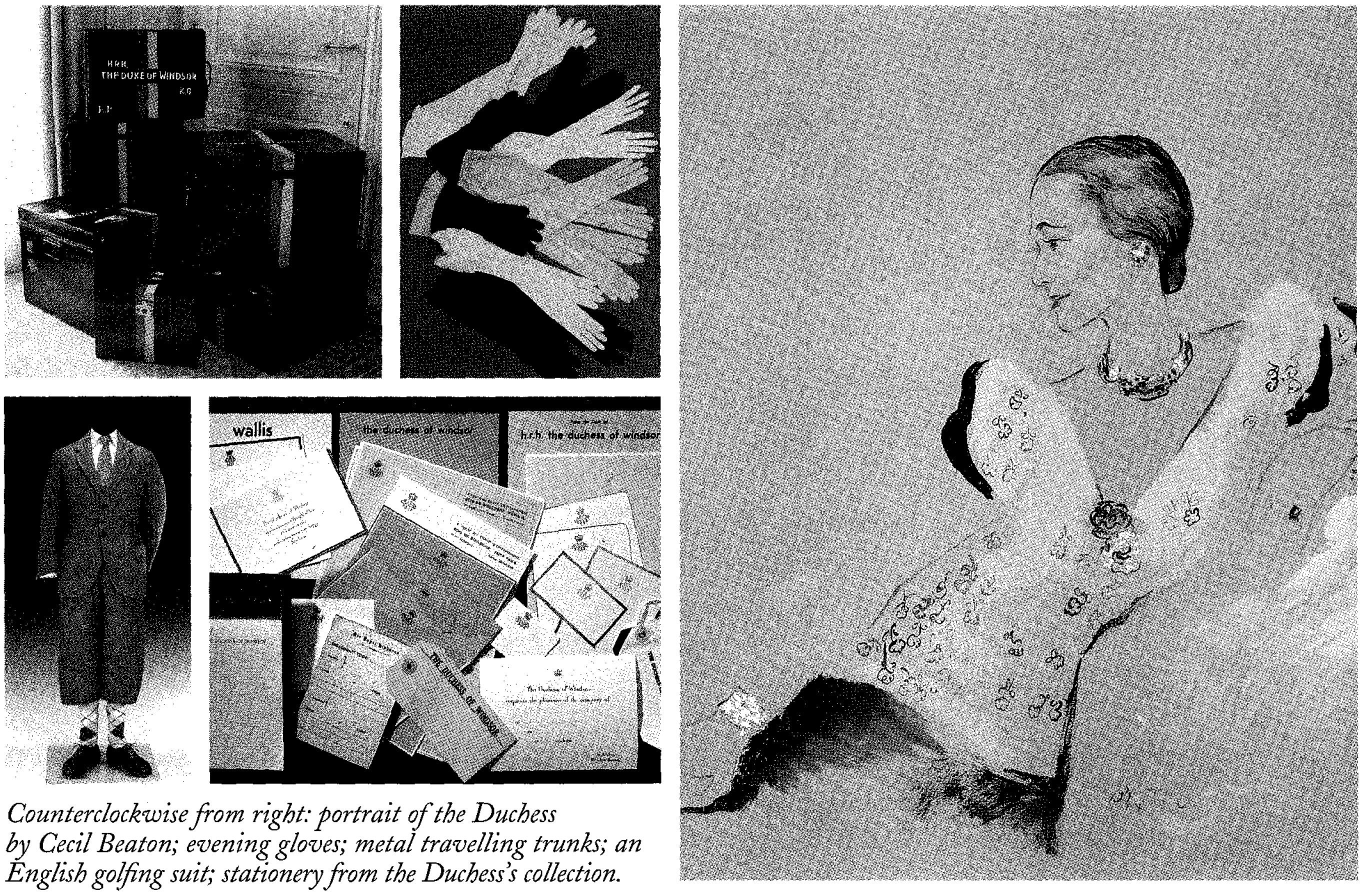
The one painting of consequence is



Above: the Duchess in Antibes. Opposite, from top: the Duke and Duchess in the garden of their Paris home; H.R.H. The Prince of Wales on 'Forest Witch,' " by Sir Alfred Munnings; two Austrian enamelled cigarette cases, circa 1940.



The Windsor style: the Duke reacted against the buttoned-up formality of what he called his "wretched childhood."



Counterclockwise from right: portrait of the Duchess by Cecil Beaton; evening gloves; metal travelling trunks; an English golfing suit; stationery from the Duchess's collection.

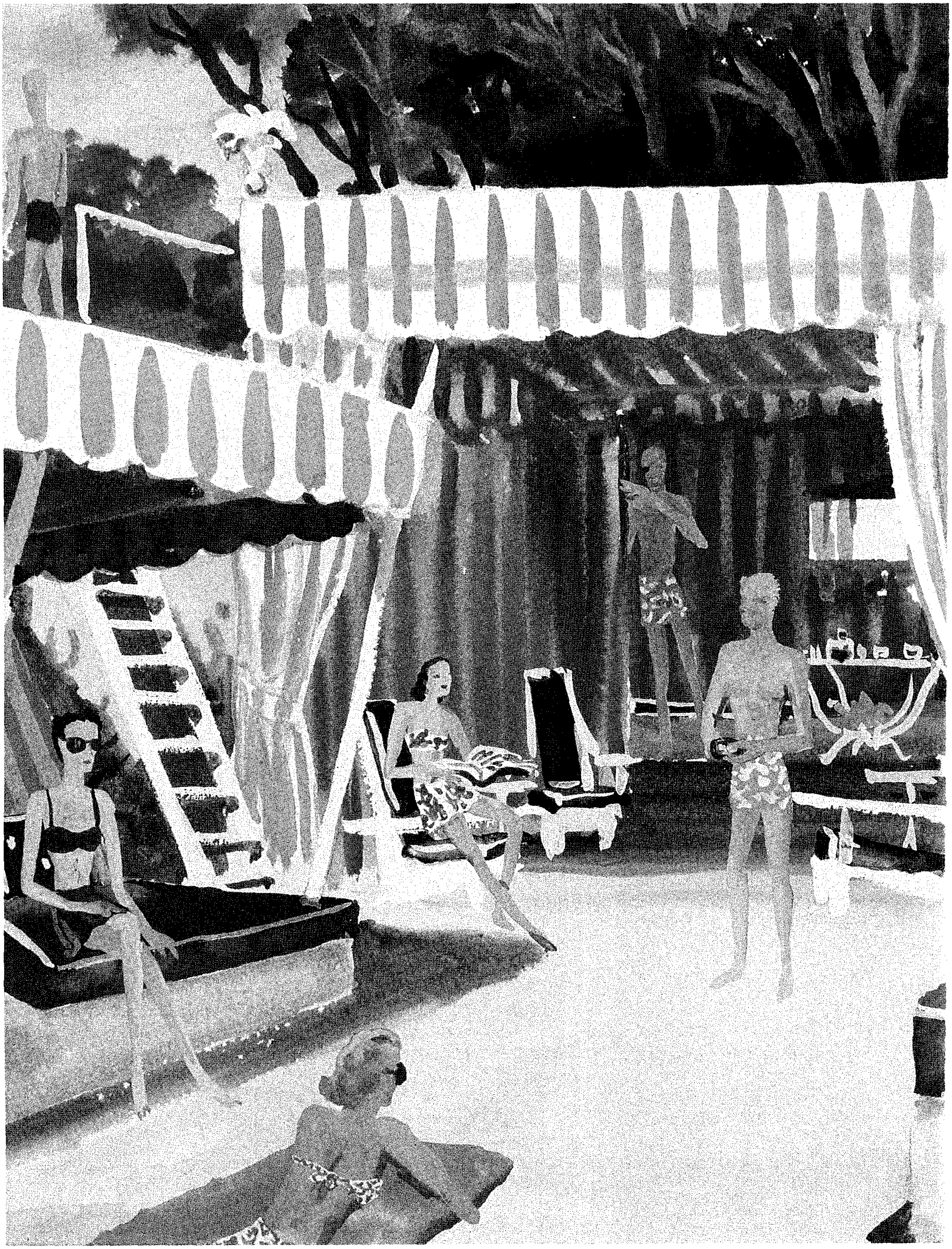
Sir Alfred Munnings's large equestrian portrait of "H.R.H. The Prince of Wales on 'Forest Witch,' " with an estimated price of between six hundred and eight hundred thousand dollars. Painted in 1921, when the future abdicator was twenty-seven, it shows him astride a chestnut mare, in top hat and scarlet hunt jacket, looking every inch the dashing beau ideal who had won or would soon win the hearts of his countrymen and of untold legions of loyal subjects in Canada, Australia, Africa, and other outposts of the empire, not to mention North and South America, which he visited on arduous good-will trips in the nineteen-twenties. He is at the height of his popularity, and he is still very much a boy—a boy whose "mental and spiritual growth stopped dead in his adolescence," one of his private secretaries, Captain Alan (Tommy) Lascelles, said later, "thereby affecting his whole consequent behavior." The hope of England looks a bit petulant, up there on that marvellous horse. He never felt cut out to be Prince of Wales, much less King, and he never quite understood why he couldn't have the private life he wanted.

OPPOSITE: THE ROBERT HUNT LIBRARY

The revelation of the sale is the vast number of objects reflecting what Edward gave up. In spite of the bitterness he felt toward his family—for not giving official recognition to his wife, for not finding something for him to do, for keeping him in exile—he and Wallis lived surrounded by the trappings of his royal past. The Prince of Wales heraldic banner that had belonged to his grandfather King Edward VII hung over the stairs in their Paris house (Lot 81, estimate $5,000-$7,000), and prominently displayed on a table in the entrance hall was the red leather dispatch box, stamped "The King" (Lot 45, $10,000-$15,000), that he used during the brief period when he was Edward VIII. His bedroom was a nest of royal reminders: the English bed from his Fort Belvedere residence; an appliquéd wall hanging depicting the arms of a Tudor Prince of Wales; handkerchiefs with the royal cipher, threadbare and expertly darned, because they could not be replaced; the handmade chimney-sweep doll that his mother, Queen Mary, gave him when he was a child (Lot 3045, $800-$1,200), and which he kept by his bed—a fit companion for the boy who never grew up.

Wallis was not like that at all. She grew up fast, eager to outdistance the humiliations of genteel poverty in Baltimore. Far from beautiful, with a fleshy nose and a protruding jaw, she learned how to focus her laserlike concentration on whatever boy or man interested her, and when Edward was introduced to her, in 1931, she already had two marriages to show for it. She was the first woman he had ever met, he once said, who showed a genuine interest in "how the Prince of Wales went about his job." His total devotion to her never flagged. "Until the day he died his eyes would follow her around the room," according to Philip Ziegler, the most authoritative of his biographers. "If she went out he would grow anxious and would shortly find a reason for following her; at the dinner table he would always be craning forward to hear what she was saying."

TODAY, after all the biographies and the published memoirs and the Windsors' own ghostwritten best-sellers, the love match of the century seems unnecessarily pathetic. She shopped; he played golf. "All my friends know I



"Until the day he died his eyes would follow her around the room": a friend's watercolor of the Windsors' pre-Paris house in Cannes shows

ke, center, looking toward his wife, far left.

would rather shop than eat," she wrote. Her severely elegant wardrobe, bought at half price or sometimes donated by Givenchy, Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, and other favorite couturiers, kept her on the Best-Dressed List for forty years. "The Duchess could be very loud and vulgar in the way she behaved, even the way she laughed," according to the Vicomtesse de Ribes. "But she had rigor and restraint in dress." The Duke's taste in clothes turned out to be more influential. Reacting against the "buttoned up" formality he had been forced to conform to during what he called his "wretched childhood," he set the style for loose, unlined jackets and high-waisted trousers (he had his jackets made in London and his pants in New York), and the repercussions of his fondness for loud, colorful tweeds, checked or tartan trousers, and two-tone shoes can still be detected in some American country clubs and old-line resort hotels.

The "Windsor style" that achieved its apogee in the Paris house seems as outmoded today as the Duke's clothes. It was a style that drew on French eighteenth-century lightness and was freshened by Elsie de Wolfe's sense of color and Wallis Simpson's need to cover every flat surface with expensive objects. A lot of upkeep was required—eighteen liveried in-house servants—to make sure that the water in the flower vases was crystal clear and that during dinner parties the guests' napkins were changed at least twice. "After a while, I *longed* to escape," said the Duchess of Marlborough, a frequent guest. "I didn't want any more flowers and perfume and jewels. It was too claustrophobic." At the Windsors' country retreat, the Duke pottered in the garden while the Duchess kept adding more chintz. Neither of them cared about books or paintings or music; the Duke preferred to busy himself with embroidery, his "secret vice." For a time, their guest list in Paris was fairly splendid, but by the late nineteen-sixties the French upper crust, *le gratin*, had grown bored with them, and the titles gave way to café society. The Windsors visited New York and Palm Beach each winter, accepting free passage on the liner United States. Elsa Maxwell and others spread the rumor that they would go anywhere if you paid them a fee; apparently, that wasn't true, but over the years they became less and less discriminating about the invitations they accepted.

When the Duke died, in 1972, his wife was already sick, and arteriosclerosis and senile dementia soon overwhelmed her. Although she was never seen in public again, she lingered on in the Paris house until her death, fourteen years after the Duke's and a few weeks short of her ninetieth birthday. By then, the house and its contents were in bad repair, after a decade of relative neglect. The house belonged to the City of Paris, which had leased it to the Windsors for a token rent, and the city agreed to lease it to Mohamed Al Fayed, a wealthy Egyptian-born businessman, who bought the contents and committed himself to restoring and documenting everything. He had previously refurbished Harrods department store in London and the Ritz Hotel in Paris, and he went about his new project, which was not completed until 1992, with professional zeal. He then decided that he and his family, who had kept an apartment in the house, wanted to live in all of it, and so, in accordance with the Duchess's instructions in her will, its lovingly assembled contents are being sold for charity. The money that Al Fayed paid the executors for the contents of the house went to the Institut Pasteur, the Paris medical-research organization, which was also the beneficiary of the Windsor jewelry sale. Neither the Duke nor the Duchess ever showed any interest in the Institut Pasteur, so *that* decision is presumed to reflect the wishes of Maître Suzanne Blum, the Duchess's iron-willed *exécutrice testamentaire*, who kept the Duchess isolated from any contact with the outside world during the last decade of her life.

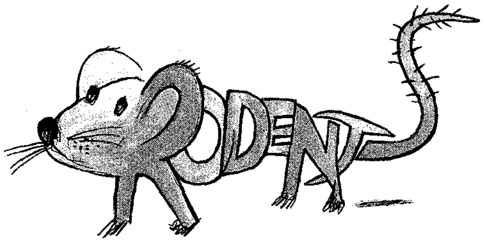
Sotheby's catalogue for the Windsor auction goes on sale August 6th (three volumes, boxed; $90). Most of the objects from the auction will be exhibited in New York before the sale (a few in Bergdorf Goodman's windows), and selections will also be shown in Chicago, Los Angeles, São Paulo, and Buenos Aires. Prospective bidders would do well to remember Emerson's famous line, which applies so poignantly to the Windsor story: "Beware what you set your heart upon. For it surely shall be yours." ♦

FICTION

MOUSES

Uncommon solutions to a common domestic problem.

BY THOM JONES



infiltrated my place at the first hard frost of the fall. I had a minor premonition that this would happen, and then, lo, it happened. For a couple of days it was in the back of my mind, in the twilight area where minor worries flourish—no big alarm bell rang, because most of the stuff you worry about never comes to pass. But then came the evidence, the irrefutable fact that not only did said perpetrators (previously unknown to me) claw and chew through a box of Wheat Thins, they defecated at the scene of the crime, leaving sizable pellets behind. Apparently "Don't shit where you eat" isn't in the rodent codebook. At first, I was in a state of denial. My place is sealed as tight as a drum. How could they get in? Also, I was thinking, I don't need this now. I really *do not* need this. I was facing problems at work. There were rumors of a cutback at the plant. In spite of my seniority—I've been an engineer for ten years—I knew I was high on the shit list. I'm a convenient target. Why? Because I'm very short in stature. Five feet nothing. And I have a slight spinal deformity—a hump. No matter what goes wrong at that hellhole, I get blamed. "Anson, the midget, did it." A computer goes down, blueprints get lost, milk sours in the lunchroom refrigerator: "The midget did it!"

So at first I buried my head in the sand. I had woken up late that day, no morning coffee, and my feet had barely hit the floor when I saw the chewed-to-shit Wheat Thins box. What a sight! It looked as if a wolverine had gone through it. There I was, standing in my pajamas in a state of complete disbelief. This was no time to conduct a full-scale pest investigation. I was late for work.

That night in bed, when fears are greatly magnified, not only was I worried about my suck-ass job, I began to think that the intruder might be a big black rat with an appetite for human flesh. Jurassic. The Wheat Thins box looked like it had been blasted by a shotgun and, as I said, the waste pellets were mighty big. For all I knew there could be a whole pack of vermin running around my place bearing disease and pestilence. Off a ship from Africa or something. Can you get rabies from *proximity*? That's what I was thinking. About 3 A.M. a miasma of moldy rodential air came wafting into my bedroom. I hadn't noticed *that* before. Somewhere, unseen, these vermin were stirring about, revved up into a state of high activity, giving off odoriferous secretions.

The next morning I was up early to see what dirty work had occurred during the night. I entered the kitchen with a heavy brogan shoe in my hand, and it was just as I thought: they had been at it again. Bolder than ever! I had thrown out the contaminated food, and closed the cupboard tight, but—hey!—no problem: the culprits had gone to the breadbox! Its lid was ajar, a good inch and a half. Had I closed it? You'd think you'd remember a pertinent detail like that, especially if you're in a batten-down-the-hatches mentality. And what if I *had* closed the breadbox? This rodent must be very strong. This rodent might very well be a rat—a rat that bench-pressed No. 3 vegetable cans and probably played tackle for the local ratball team. Black Bart, the Norway power rat. Fangola from Borneo.

On no sleep, work that morning was an ongoing hell. I had to sneak out to my car at lunch and catch a nap, but I woke up three hours later not in the least refreshed: it wasn't a nap, it was a damn coma. The boss called me in: "Yeah yeah, ying ying, ya ya, where in the *hell* have you been?" Put the fear of God in me. I stayed late working on the annual report, which made no sense to me anymore. I was just sitting there, "pretending," which is a lot harder than actually working. You could chop logs all day, stack thirty cords of wood, and not get as tired. When the boss bagged out, I waited five minutes and then left. My back was killing me. The hump veers toward my left shoulder. It was all hot and knotted up like an angry fist. Just complete agony.

I stopped at the supermarket for some Advil and asked a stocker where the mousetraps were. Evidently, there'd been a run on rodent traps. "Cold weather," he said.

I said, "You haven't been selling *rat* traps?"

"Rat traps, yeah, sold a few," he said, pointing them out. They were huge rectangular slabs of pinewood with monstrous springs and rectangular clap bars made of heavy-gauge metal. Big enough to snag a Shetland pony.

"Whoa, man!" I said. "I hope I don't need one of those."

"Where do you live?" he asked me, and I told him the neighborhood and he said no doubt my problem was mice. Rats don't frequent upscale places, he said. They go for the shitholes where people leave garbage around. He couldn't guarantee it but he was ninety per cent sure. Then he left me alone in the aisle to inspect the merchandise. I chided myself for being melodramatic. No rats, just some mice. And others were having the same problem. I was reassured. I was fortunate to be able to get any traps at all. There were only five left and I bought all five.

I thought of using poison, going for complete and certain eradication, but I wanted to see the corpses. Your mouse poisoner is like a B-52 bomber pilot flying miles above a war zone—the bloodless battle. That's cool, but sometimes you hear of poisoned mice dying in parts of the house that are inaccessible to the homeowner and giving off a horrible smell. People start yanking off dry-

FILIP PAGOWSKI

wall panels to get to the smelly things, knocking down chimneys, tearing up the foundation.

Vacor, for instance, a rodenticide that looks like cornmeal, destroys the beta cells of the pancreas, causing instant diabetes, followed by chest pain, impaired intellect, coma, and finally death. A diabetic mouse with severe hyperglycemia will develop an incredible thirst and head outside to look for water—you don't have to tear your house apart tracking down odors. Strychnine is another possibility. An overdose of strychnine destroys the nerves and causes convulsions. The sick rodent cannot bear noise or bright light. It dies a prolonged, agonizing death of utter torment. That kind of mouse wouldn't opt for the hustle and bustle of the outdoors. That's a hide-in-the-drywall mouse.

All in all, the trap is more humane. But I was so angry at the inconvenience I had been through—disturbed sleep, fright, the loss of snack foods—that the thought of a mouse writhing in pain out in a field somewhere did not bother my conscience in the slightest. The opposite was the case. It gave me satisfaction. Die, suckah!

I SET three of the traps in the kitchen using peanut butter as bait. I put another in the bedroom and one behind the living-room couch. That night, moments after I turned off the lights, I heard one of the kitchen traps go off. *Wap!* Man, I almost hit the ceiling. I wasn't sure if I heard a shriek or not. It all happened so fast. In the blink of an eye, an execution.

I'm embarrassed to admit that I was a little afraid to confront the consequences. But what could I do? I picked up my heavy shoe and went out. The victim was a gray mouse with broad, powerful shoulders, prickly chin whiskers, red beady eyes, and a short stumpy tail. Its mouth was open, exposing a crimson tongue and sharp yellow teeth. Ahggh! The trap had snapped its neck. I picked up the trap and quickly tossed it in the garbage. How that mouse had so totally destroyed the Wheat Thins was beyond me, but such are the mysteries of life. There, I'm thinking. Done! Half an hour later I was sawing logs.

In the morning I got up and went to the kitchen to make coffee and I saw another mouse, this one still alive, with one paw caught in a trap. It was trying to drag-ass out of there. I got my work gloves out of the garage and picked up the trap, the mouse hanging down from it, wriggling. I put the mouse in a coffee can, and then—I don't know what made me do it, maybe because Christmas was coming—I punched some holes in it for air. The mouse's foot was smashed, but otherwise it was O.K. I set the can in the garage and went off to work.

I was tired again, with moderate-to-severe hunch pains. Except for short-lived bursts of activity when my boss passed by with a scowl on his repugnant face, all I could do was sit at my desk and "pretend" all day. Even though I'd got some sleep, I was thrashed, body and soul.

When I got home I threw some wood shavings into an old aquarium and put the mouse in there. If it was in pain, I couldn't tell. I gave it a little dish of water and some cornflakes. The thing was this: I couldn't stand having an invisible invader prowling around in my house at will, but with the animal caged and me in full control, I could tolerate it. I mean the mouse was just trying to get by like the rest of us. I named him Al.

After a few days, Al's foot turned black and fell off. He wouldn't eat for a while. I think he had a fever. A close call with death. I put out some whole-wheat bread with peanut butter on it. He loved that. He was going to weather the crisis. He started to gain weight. I found a hamster wheel at a garage sale and the guy just gave it to me to get rid of it.

That's when Al began his rehab therapy. Without his foot, he got by hobbling, but his whole left shoulder was weak. On the wheel, he struggled and became disoriented. To encourage him, I put his favorite treat, a Hershey's chocolate square, in a little box in front of the wheel. Stick and carrot. Pretty soon Al was running his ass and lost all the weight from his peanut-butter days of convalescence. With treats to motivate him, he'd put in five hours a night on the wheel. One night, just as I was getting him his Hershey's square, he hopped into my palm and let me hand-feed him. It was a momentous transition. Suddenly this little wild animal was on the road to domestication. He trusted me. I felt like I was in tune with the universe. But not for long.

THE next day at work, the boss stuck his ugly face inches from my own. "You're terminated, Anson. Clean out your desk! You have one hour."

The heartless bastard. I'd known it was coming, but I was devastated just the same. He couldn't wait until after Christmas. I immediately drove to the unemployment office. Filled out the forms. Stood around and waited. Geez, what a seedy stink-ass joint.

If you're an engineer, a job in these times is the hardest thing in the world to find. There are thousands of engineers.

I put together a résumé and scanned the want ads. There was nothing. One of the no-jobs at the unemployment office told me that nobody hires during the Christmas season, so just chill out.

At night I watched TV. It was me and Al, with him crawling up my arm and on top of my head and whatnot. Once in a while out slipped a mouse pellet but what are you going to do? Al is my friend, so it was no biggie. I wondered if he missed his life in the wild. I wondered if he was bored. If I let him go in the spring, with no foot, what would happen?

One night after a futile and discouraging day of handing out résumés, I popped over to the pet shop and bought a companion for Al. A pet mouse cost a dollar and eighty-nine cents. I got a female and named her Angela. I put her in with Al and they sniffed each other out for a bit, but when I turned my back they started fighting. Angela was kicking ass. She bit the piss out of Al and he was left bleeding all over, especially from his stub. I broke up the fight, stuck her in the coffee can, and put her in the dark garage for punishment. Then I put hydrogen peroxide on Al's wounds. If it wasn't for the incredible cardiovascular reserve he'd built up running the wheel, I think she would have killed him.

I took to hand-feeding Al again—I had to—and he eventually came around. He seemed to like the mouse chow I got him. I figure that animals have body wisdom and will eat the right thing if you provide it for them. Pretty soon Al was on the wheel again, and we were watching TV together at night, and everything was just hunky. He padded around on my scalp with his three little paws, up and down my arm, with no fear at all. It was like we'd been pals in some previous lifetime. Bosom buddies.

I fashioned a divider panel for the aquarium and took Angela out of the punishment can. But I was still hating her. I gave her nothing but peanut butter. I denied her access to the exercise wheel. And in a couple of weeks she was a disgusting tub of lard. Meanwhile, Al, on his good diet, exercise regime, and nightly entertainment, was the very picture of health. Angela was practically eating her body weight in peanut butter every day. She ballooned up. I started weighing her on a postal scale, and one time she bit me. She didn't break the skin, but after the infraction it was three more days in the punishment can.

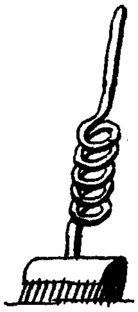
BY now I had been to every fucking engineering firm in the city. Nobody was hiring. If you're a senior engineer, forget it. They hire a guy out of college, pay him a substandard salary, and get him to do the work of ten people. I reformulated my résumé and started looking for a job as a technician.

Angela was still eating peanut butter by the tablespoon. One day I came home and she was lying on her back with four feet in the air, stiff. Heart attack. In just six weeks' time. I enjoy peanut butter myself. I had been carrying peanut-butter sandwiches in my briefcase as I canvassed the city looking for work. I switched to lowfat turkey. It costs a fortune and, hungerwise, it doesn't satisfy, but I got to thinking of all the stuff I had eaten in my life, the whole pile of it. In peanut butter alone, there would be a warehouse. Cigarettes? Truck trailers full. After what I'd seen happen to Angela in six weeks, I felt lucky to be alive. I squared my diet away.

I got some Just for Men and colored my hair jet-black. I began to figure that my age was another handicap. But then one of the no-jobs at unemployment asked me if I'd lost my mind. "Anson, you look like Bela Lugosi!" Another said, "Man, that's a dye job you can spot a mile away." Some skaters on the street asked me if I was the singer Roy Orbison. Maybe they said this because I was wearing a pair of shades, or maybe they were just dicking with me. I said, "No, man, I'm Junior fuckin' Walker."

When I got home and checked myself out in the mirror, I saw that the no-jobs were right about my hair. It was too dark and it made my skin look pale. It was almost green. I looked like an undertaker. Plus, I'd lost weight, and my clothes were too big. Overnight, I had metamorphosed from a Stage One no-job to a Stage Three. Up all night with pain, I finally dropped off and didn't get up till four in the afternoon. Too late to go out. I didn't shave. I was thinking, What's the point of looking? They don't want to hire you. Capitalism sucks. The big companies just want to get rich. I got to hating everybody.

I DROVE over to the pet store and bought two dozen mice and a separate wire cage for each. You read stuff in medical reports about how a certain drug or vitamin did something in some study but it will be five years before the general public can get it. Or you read that something has produced miraculous results in chickens but they haven't tried it on humans yet. I'm the kind that figures, hell, if it works on a chicken it's going to work on everybody. I mean if some guy spots mold on bread and turns it into penicillin, why not me? If I can't get a job, maybe I'll just go out and win the Nobel Prize.



I put the mice on a variety of diets and subjected them to various stresses. I kept a control group and fed its members the same mouse chow I fed Al. Other mice—eating a diet similiar to my own, drinking a proportionate amount of coffee, and keeping the same hours—were dead in five weeks. Challenge, a momentary adaptation to stress, then exhaustion and death. I accepted the results with equanimity. I knew what was in the cards for me; once again I had evidence. Maybe I was lucky to have been canned. What I needed now was a plan: I wasn't going to be a victim anymore.

At 3 A.M. I took off my white lab coat, washed my hands, and called up my ex-boss. Brrringgg! Ding-a-ling! Brrringgg! When he answered, I hung up! Ah, ha, ha, shit! I then had a snack and about twenty minutes later—just when he'd fallen back to sleep—I called again. Ha, ha, ha, fuck! I pictured him lying there, seething.

I put another batch of mice on a regime mimicking my old schedule, but I fortified their diets with vitamins. They died in just *under* five weeks, confirming something I had always suspected: vitamins, especially the kind that have a strong smell, not only make you feel bad but can hasten your demise! The result held even for the mice that had the antioxidants cocktail: flavonoids, soy, red-wine extract, beta carotene, etc.

To some mice I gave huge amounts of coffee. Coffee mice became very aggressive and would often bite me. For each attempted bite, it was no coffee and three days in a punishment can. It skewed the validity of the experiments, but I already suspected the ultimate outcome. They say coffee is pretty much harmless, but after studying a coffee mouse's brains at autopsy I calculated otherwise. Shrunken thymus glands, a swelling in the cranial cavity, and a shrivelling of the adrenal glands. They could run the most complicated labyrinths I constructed, but they were burning it at both ends.

ONE night I called my ex-boss and he fucking *made* me. He said he got Caller I.D. and knew it was me on the line. He threatened to turn me in to the police. I didn't say boo, man, I just hung up. I worried until dawn. I could hear my heart thumping in my chest. Was what I'd done a jailable offense? So much for the job recommendation.

And then, lo, one of my hundreds of résumés bore fruit! I got a call from a large electronics firm, went in, and took some gruelling tests involving math, calculus, even physics. I was interrogated by a panel of hard-ass guys with starched white shirts and stern faces. At the conclusion, they said I was one of fifteen people being considered. Two hundred applicants had already been rejected. They told me that employees were subject to random drug tests. They said they would do a background check. Then they'd call me.

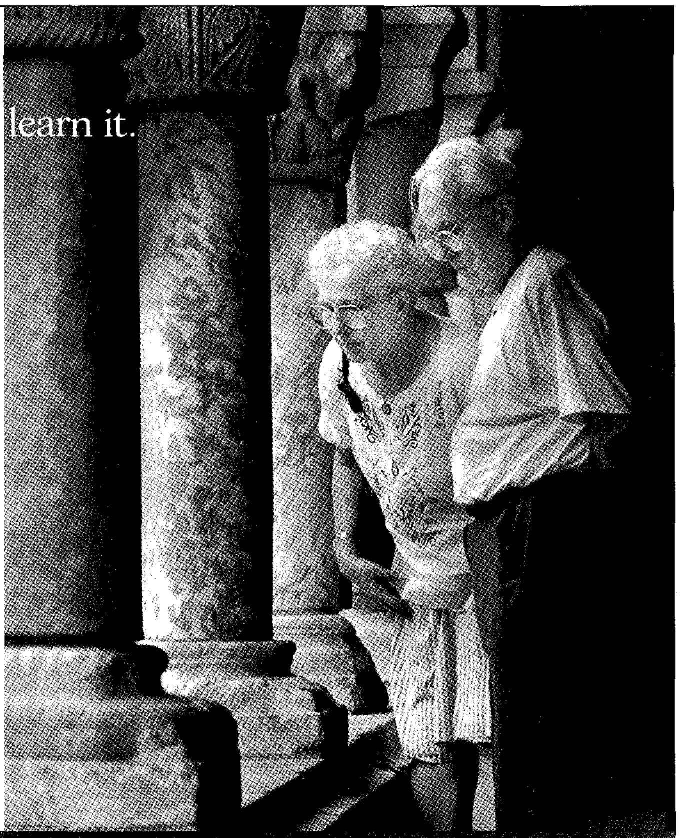
THE hardiest of my mice turned out to be the swimmers and walkers. The walkers were put on exercise wheels equipped with speed governors and forced to march at a nine-m.p.h. pace eight hours a day. Along the bottoms of their cages were metal grids wired to give them an electric shock if they decided to hop off the wheel and shirk their duty. A few rebelled, but the rebellion was dealt with easily: I merely dialled up the electricity. This made me realize the folly of my so-called punishment cans. A nice dark spot in a quiet room was not "punishment." True punishment, such as that reserved for recidivist biters, now took place in a proper punishment room with hot bright lights and severe jolts of electricity. A yoga mouse that I happened to take a dislike to, a little Hare Krishna crybaby who couldn't handle the nine-m.p.h. pace, died after thirty-four hours of continuous exercise. The shock burns on its feet, tail, and stomach were secondary to cardiac arrest. Hey! I'm sorry, but it's survival of the fittest. My tests demonstrated that a reasonable amount of hard physical labor each day produced health and contentment. Bodies are made for work, not idleness.

MAN, what else could go wrong? I was standing on a corner, minding my own business, and this no-job I knew, a Stage Three, came along and offered to buy me dinner at a Greek restaurant. I said sure, thinking some windfall had come his way. We did a fair amount of drinking and then had this big meal, several courses, with rounds of ouzo for the house. Then he got nervous for some reason. When we reached the register, some drastic thought passed through his brain like a dark cloud. He said to me, "Have you got any money?" I told him I had about sixty cents, and he stood there for a moment. He looked up, down, over his shoulder. Suddenly he yelled "Run!" and bolted. I was standing flat-footed. A couple of waiters took off after him. So did the cook, with a fifteen-inch blade. What a shocker! Too late, I ran the other way, and the older waiters started after me. Six long blocks they chased me. The no-job got away. Me, I was arrested. The police handcuffed me, shoved me into a patrol car, and whipped me off to the precinct station with their lights flashing. I spent the weekend in jail and finally arranged bond on Monday morning. To cap things off, when I got home I found Al in his aquarium with his three feet in the air, stone dead. I won't lie to you. It was very upsetting. I burst into tears. The lady living above me heard my racking sobs and knocked on the door to see if I was O.K.

HANNIBAL was a well-exercised gladiator mouse. He had a piebald coat, white and tan. I fed him a diet of meat, vegetables, and grain. I gave him testosterone injections from ground-up mouse testicles. He got little boils at the injection sites, but he also became supermuscular. Hannibal won the first annual Gladiator Mouse Championship, killing in succession two swimmers, two walkers, a coffee mouse, and the remaining population of yoga mice—seventeen victims in all. I just kept throwing them in, one after another, getting more and more excited by the ferociousness of the battle. I felt like Caligula. Oh, man! It was too much.

Hannibal's capacity for work and his resistance to the usual stressors, including the punishment sessions, exceeded that of any of my previous specimens. His entire torso was pure muscle. The discipline he showed on the wheel, in the maze, in the pool, or defending his life in the gladiator pit, his appetite for work, and his willingness to meet any challenge made him my most interesting success. I knew I was on to something huge if only there was some way to dampen his murderous impulses, his relentless aggression, and his compulsive sexuality. To be able to harness all that drive and latent productivity. What a challenge!

I was able to farm more testosterone,



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and I injected it into female mice. The results were dramatic—similiar to those which had occurred with Hannibal. But the female supermice, with a natural supply of estrogen, were more tractable. I was at a crossroads in my research. Was this the answer? A female named Cynthia defeated Hannibal in a tooth-and-nail gladiator bout. Yet she stopped short of killing the former champion. I removed his battered body from the little arena and administered adrenaline to his wounds, and then Hannibal bit me on the quick of my fingernail. Yeowza! What happened next was a blur. I slammed Hannibal against the wall like Randy Johnson hurling a ninety-eight-m.p.h. fastball. He bounced off and started scrambling around on the floor. I gave chase and stomped him to death in my stocking feet. What an ingrate! And after all I'd done for him.

A few weeks later I was at the university veterinary school, checking out some books on mouse anatomy, when it seemed to me that people were purposefully avoiding me. It went beyond the normal thing you get from being little. Was my fly open? Did I have something in my nose? As I walked up to the checkout desk, I smelled B.O. I put two and two together and realized that the B.O. was coming from me. I tested my breath by licking the back of my wrist and smelling it. It was awful. How far had I sunk? I had a brief panic attack outside and quickly made for home. After I'd had a long bath, the episode passed off.

BEFORE DAWN ON BLUFF ROAD

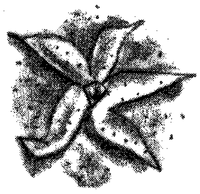
The crow's raw hectoring cry
scoops clean an oval divot
of sky, its fading echo
among the oaks and poplars swallowed
first by a jet banking west
then the Erie-Lackawanna
sounding its horn as it comes through the tunnel
through the cliffs to the river
and around the bend of King's Cove Bluff,
full of timber, Ford chassis, rock salt.

You can hear it in the dark
from beyond what was once the amusement park.
And the wind carries along as well,
from down by the river,
when the tide's just so,
the drainage just so,
the chemical ghost of old factories,
the rotted piers and warehouses:
lye, pig fat, copra from Lever Bros.,
formaldehyde from the coffee plant,

dyes, unimaginable solvents—
a soup of polymers, oxides,
tailings fifty years old
seeping through the mud, the aroma
almost comforting by now, like food,
wafting into my childhood room
with its fevers and dreams.
My old parents asleep,
only a few yards across the hall,
door open—lest I cry?
I remember
almost nothing of my life.

—AUGUST KLEINZAHLER

With the help of the textbooks, I started harvesting other mouse hormones, even though the organ systems were often so tiny I felt I was performing microsurgery. It was also frustrating. The boils Cynthia developed from growth-hormone injections turned into large hard lumps that eventually proved fatal: upon autopsy, I discovered that these were tumors. Cynthia's liver nourished tumors as well. One by one, all my female supermice developed the same symptoms. Another dead end.



I never got the call from the firm that interviewed me. A month had passed, so, taking the bull by the horns, I called the firm and said that I had enjoyed our meeting and would be grateful for a job. I knew it was too late, and it made me angry. Just because I'm five feet tall! I hinted at the possibility of a discrimination suit. A vice-president got on the line and told me that my size had nothing to do with it. They were impressed by my qualifications. I had the job in the bag, but my former boss had given me a poor recommendation: he said I made harassing phone calls at three in the morning. The man said I could have even skated on that charge, but he'd noticed an item in the police blotter involving an incident at a Greek restaurant. I was so shaken by this disclosure that I said it must have been someone else with the same name as mine. A transparent lie. Despondent, I went out and bought two six-packs of beer. The next day I couldn't get out of bed. Nor on the day following. I got a violent, three-day hangover and vowed never to drink again.

Court. Oh, God! The very thought of it. I went over to the restaurant and offered full restitution. Nothing doing, they said. I tried to explain what had happened but they made furious Greek gestures at me—God knows what they meant. They said, "See you in court, haffa pint! Broke-a-back. Shorty pants!"

Well, wait a minute, I said. It was the other guy's fault. I gave them the whole story. They said, Tell us who the other guy is and we'll drop the charge. Actually, I don't know the guy. I mean I "know" him, but he told so many lies I don't know if up is down with him. At one point he told me he was an actor and had been engaged to Catherine Deneuve. He was a smoothie, and handsome—I half believed him.

I threw myself on the mercy of the court and got reamed with a two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar fine, court costs, six months' probation, and a hundred hours of community service. Plus, now I've got a record. Also, I got hit for a hundred and fourteen in unpaid traffic tickets.

After court I lost interest in the mice and fell into a deep, Stage Five no-job depression. The Nobel Prize? Screw it. I went to a clinic and got a prescription for antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs. On them, all I wanted to do was sleep. Twenty hours? No problem. It was a pleasant escape. After years of insomnia, I was in heaven.

But the medicine made me fat. Bloat weight. I gained back all that I'd lost. Pretty soon I couldn't get into the clothes that had once been hanging on me. I got a huge gut, a pair of thighs like twin water heaters, and a fat ass that stuck out like a clown's. I'd never thought that I could sink this low. I resorted to wearing sweatpants.

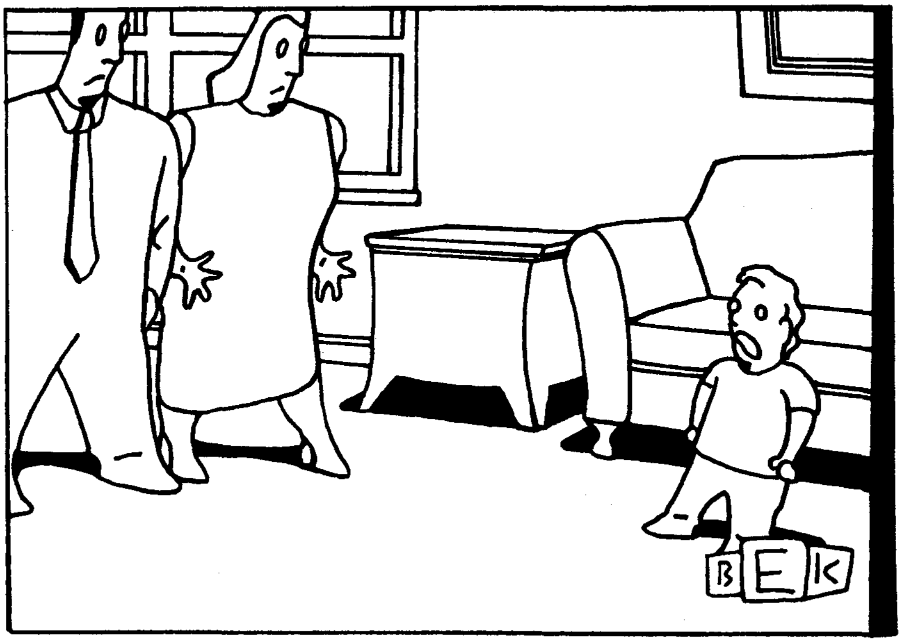
I started setting my alarm clock for late-afternoon appointments and even then I missed about half of them. I wondered how I would ever reassimilate myself into the mainstream of American life. I felt so low and so bad I didn't want to talk to anybody. The landlord came by: people were complaining about a smell. I didn't want him to see my mouse lab. The way things were going it would have been a federal bust—Dr. Mengele Nabbed At Last! I told the landlord I was taking care of a pair of hamsters for a friend, don't worry, I'll deal with the smell. He said, "Man, Anson, you gained weight." Well, no shit, Sherlock!

I cleaned out the mouse cages, replacing the soiled sawdust with fresh cedar shavings. Then it occurred to me to put the mice on this antidepressant that was kicking my ass so bad. Whenever I tried to get off it, I got this full-body pulsar buzz, and everything began to vibrate until I took another pill. I calibrated doses and started medicating the mice. Within three hours all of them were out. Dead? I couldn't tell. But it turned out no, they weren't dead—they were in comas. I wondered if that's what I looked like at night. One slept for two days and didn't change positions: frozen in one posture. I put another on the punishment wheel, and it was oblivious to the shocks. Blue sparks were popping off its paws and it ignored them.

I mentioned earlier that most of the bad stuff you worry about never comes to pass. But sometimes, I was now discovering, it does. You fall into a kind of Bermuda Triangle of hard-ass reality. How long was this going to go on, I asked myself? I finally managed to get off the drugs by taking smaller and smaller doses. And slowly the bloat weight came off. I phoned for an interview for a technician's job at a factory less than a mile from my building, and I was hired that very day. I couldn't believe it. The job was a piece of cake, too. I went in and read the paper and drank coffee for an hour before anyone got ambitious. There were numerous breaks and good camaraderie all the way around. Even so, it was hard to get through a day. I didn't have the stamina. Coming back from Stage Five was tough business. In the annals of no-jobdom, it's rare. Almost unheard of. I had pulled off a big one.

Pretty soon some of the design engineers were hanging out with me, asking my advice on projects and so on. One thing led to another, and I was promoted to senior engineer and making a third more than I got at the last place. It was easy duty, this job. I got into the work and—zing!—the time just flew. I never had a job I *liked* before. I didn't think such a thing existed.

THE mice, as they died off, I buried in little toilet-paper tubes. They have a life expectancy of three years. I didn't replace them. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. What I did was pretty unconscionable. Absolute power, as they say. I'm not proud of my behavior. I had been living without checks and balances. The crap I pulled makes me think of what the space invaders will do to us if they conquer the world. Make slaves of us, eat us, flay us alive and torture us, do every kind of sinister thing in the book. There's a dark side to intelligent beings, an irrational craving for war, personal defilement, and reckless destruction, even if we know better. So if aliens are out there and they do come down I don't expect good things. Aliens aren't out there flying around on errands of mercy or benevolence. To them, we're just so much protein. We're calories. When the space invaders take over, it's the end of the human era. Before that happens, I want to get in a few good times—travel to Ireland, learn how to dance, take tuba lessons, who knows. I've learned that happiness is like the gold in the Yukon mines, found only now and then, as it were, by the caprices of chance. It comes rarely in chunks or boulders but in the tiniest of grains. I'm a free-floater now, happy to take what little comes my way. A grain here, a grain there. What more can you ask for? ♦



"Sweet? I thought you wanted someone with edge."

BOOKS

MOST WANTED

The master criminal unmasked.

BY ALEX ROSS

ANYONE who read Sherlock Holmes stories as a kid must remember the severely chilling effect of the entrance of Professor Moriarty, mastermind of criminal London. Holmes has met an enemy as diabolically clever as himself, and, in "The Final Problem," he tells Watson:

> For years past I have continually been conscious of some power behind the malefactor, some deep organizing power which forever stands in the way of the law, and throws its shield over the wrong-doer. . . . For years I have endeavoured to break through the veil which shrouded it, and at last the time came when I seized my thread and followed it, until it led me, after a thousand cunning windings, to ex-Professor Moriarty, of mathematical celebrity.
>
> He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson. He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans.

It is a beautiful aria of suspicion: Moriarty is an organizer not just of evil but of the "undetected," whatever that may be. More than a crime boss, Moriarty is a bogeyman who explains the unexplained. "Unexplained murder is uncanny," Theodor Reik wrote in 1936. "A murder without a murderer, a deed without a trace—these seem to revive an old belief which once lived in all of us, namely the belief in the possibility of murder by thought." Moriarty seems perfectly capable of killing by thought. He increases disorder, generates suspicion, sets lures for the paranoid mind. Holmes is his final victim.

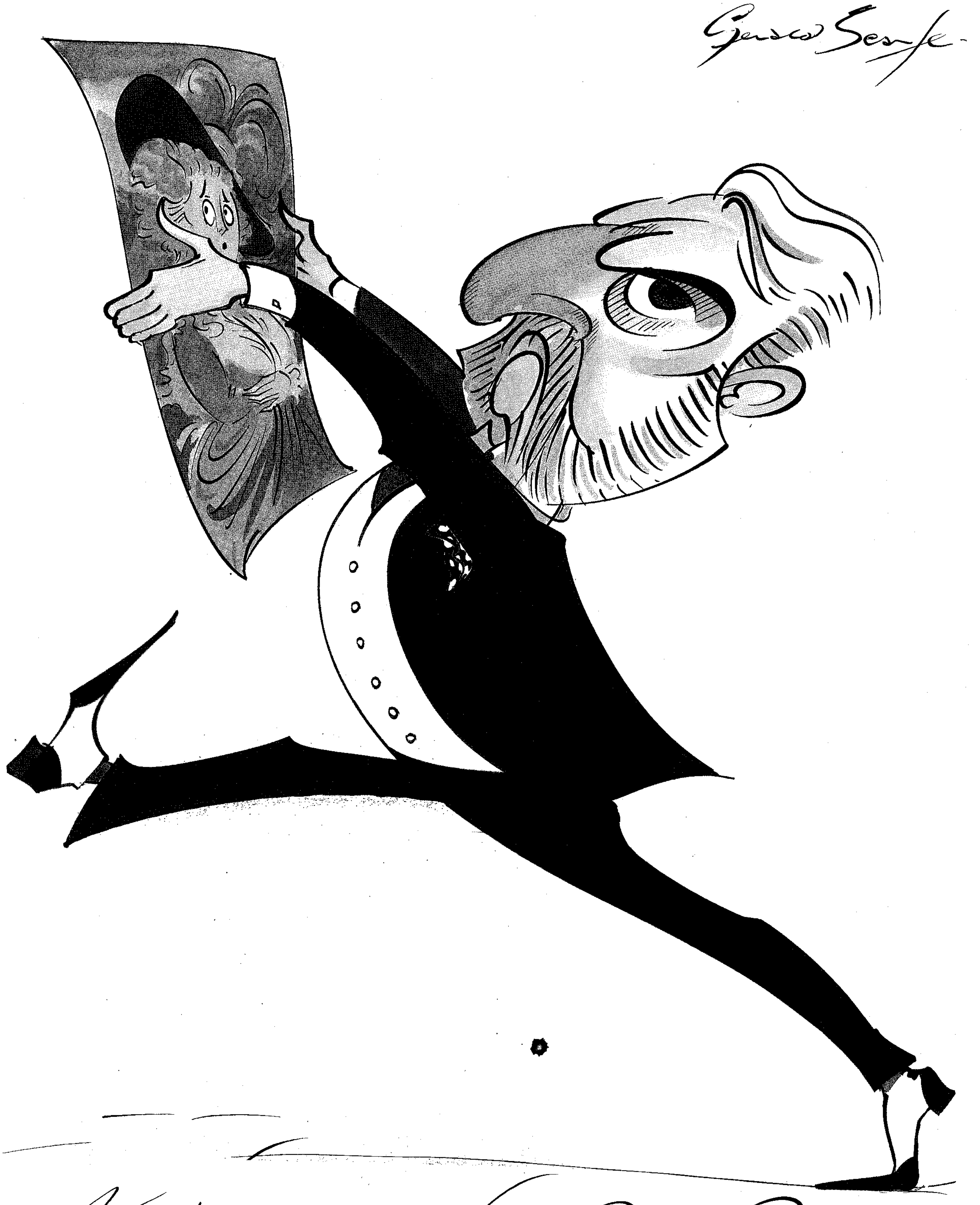
Conan Doyle's creation is the exemplar of the archcriminal—a malefactor who treats crime not as a business but as an art. Unlike mob bosses, drug lords, and other underworld executives, archcriminals have no social station, and they are obsessively secretive. They may have a vague ideology—perhaps an interest in overturning conventional society—but they have no precise political aims. They also more or less *belong to* art. While they are commonplace in fiction and film—think of Poe's Man of the Crowd, Conrad's Mr. Kurtz, Fritz Lang's Dr. Mabuse, and, recently, Keyser Söze in "The Usual Suspects"—they hardly ever turn up in real life. Why do we feel the need to invent them? Are they a romantic exaggeration of everyday threats? Or are they a mirage, emanating from a desperate urge to solve all mysteries?

BEN MACINTYRE, in his new book, "The Napoleon of Crime: The Life and Times of Adam Worth, Master Thief" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $24), claims that there really was a Professor Moriarty: a Victorian criminal on whom Conan Doyle's evil genius was based. It's just the sort of alarming discovery one would expect from this writer—a British journalist who for his previous book, "Forgotten Fatherland," went to an obscure part of Paraguay and interviewed survivors of a hideously inbred Aryan colony founded by Friedrich Nietzsche's sister. Now Macintyre has devoted his investigative energies to the enigmatic Adam Worth, a late-nineteenth-century outlaw who stole something like four million dollars on three continents and became the Most Wanted of his day. Napoleon or not, Worth was an exquisite human paradox: a thief who never resorted to violence; an American thug who acquired the manner of a Victorian gentleman; an arrogantly self-sufficient character who ended his days in debt to his former nemesis, the private detective William Pinkerton. "The most remarkable criminal of them all," Pinkerton said of Worth. A Scotland Yard inspector called him "the Napoleon of the criminal world," echoing Conan Doyle.

Adam Worth was a German Jew whose family moved to the United States in 1849, when he was five. He began his career as a pickpocket on the Bowery and worked his way up the ladder of the thieves' trade. His youthful masterpiece was the extraction of nearly a million dollars from the Boylston National Bank, in Boston, in 1869. After studying the terrain around the bank, Worth set up a fake business next door, selling a spurious product called Gray's Oriental Tonic; fortunately, passing shoppers never showed the slightest interest in it. From inside the store, he dug his way directly into the bank's vault. (If it sounds familiar, it's close to the plot of Conan Doyle's "The Red-Headed League.") This spectacular heist put the Pinkerton Agency on his trail, and America became too hot for him. So he moved to Europe, assuming, with characteristic wit, the name of Henry J. Raymond, who was the recently deceased founder of the New York *Times*. In Paris, he set up a notorious gangster salon called the American Bar. When Pinkerton pursued him there, Worth moved to London, where he played a perpetual game of cat and mouse with the dim inspectors of Scotland Yard.

Worth capped his career in 1876, when he stole Gainsborough's portrait of Georgiana Spencer, the Duchess of Devonshire. The great-great-great-great-aunt of Princess Diana, Georgiana was one of the gaudiest fashion plates of the late eighteenth century, and she became famous again in the Victorian period, her hair and hat copied everywhere. Gainsborough's painting was drawing huge crowds at William Agnew's gallery, in London; Worth broke in late one night and cut it from its frame. He did not take it simply out of a love of art. He had been searching for a way to get his younger, less criminally skilled brother released from prison, and he thought that Agnew could be coerced into interceding with the authorities. But the brother was unexpectedly released, and Worth was left with this icon of coy, scandalous beauty. Even though the painting might have fetched hundreds of thousands of dollars, Worth did not part with it for twenty-five years. As Macintyre tells it, he became obsessed with the Duchess, taking her with him as he travelled, hiding her in a false-bottomed trunk. "She was his captured enemy standard," Macintyre writes, "tangible evi-

GERALD SCARFE



Gerald Scarfe

ADAM WORTH RUNS OFF WITH THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE dence of his hatred for and power to undermine respectable society, an object of overwhelming beauty to crown Worth's ugly trade, a focus of longing and loathing."

Macintyre, a vibrant writer who delights in unexpected parallels, notes that Worth got in ahead of several tycoons who were vying for the Gainsborough. Ferdinand de Rothschild had expressed an interest in it, and Junius Morgan, J. P. Morgan's father, had, in fact, agreed to buy it days before the theft. And when the painting finally resurfaced, in 1901, J. P. Morgan snapped it up. (It has since returned to the Duke of Devonshire.) The image of a master criminal collecting art appealed to Conan Doyle, who, in his story "The Valley of Fear," installed a striking, pricey portrait of a young woman on the wall of Professor Moriarty's study. That reference appears to clinch Macintyre's theory that Worth and Moriarty were one and the same.

But Macintyre overreaches a bit in his desire to align history and fiction. Worth was not the head of a vast network; he managed most crimes himself, employing select confederates. He had a most un-Moriarty-like urge to be always on the scene. He was finally caught in Belgium while running down the street with a sack of bank money in his arms. He was not, in short, the Napoleon of crime. There are certainly references to Worth in "The Valley of Fear" (1914), but most likely none in "The Final Problem" (1893), the crucial story in which Holmes destroys Moriarty and, in the process, destroys himself. (Conan Doyle would later give in to popular demand and resurrect the detective.) Macintyre overlooks a matter of timing: Conan Doyle wrote "The Final Problem" three months before Worth's remarkable career was first reported in detail in England (in July of 1893), and he had probably conceived an archcriminal nemesis for Holmes as early as 1891. It's not a fatal flaw, since Macintyre's book is about Worth, not the Sherlock Holmes stories. But the portrait might have been richer if Macintyre had taken note of the literary pedigree of archcriminality that preceded Worth and has shaped perceptions of him all along.

UNSEEN evildoers are, of course, an old standby of melodrama. Orson Welles once remarked of his famous cameo as Harry Lime, in "The Third Man," that the best villains are those who stay hidden while everyone else discusses them in tones of awe and fear. (Bryan Singer's "The Usual Suspects" gave wonderful new life to that device.) Poe, Conan Doyle's chief influence, modernized the devil-in-our-midst story in "The Man of the Crowd" (1840). It's really Poe's first tale of detection, told by a hyperalert observer who can grasp whole human histories at a single glance. While the narrator is sitting in a London coffeehouse, reading the faces of passersby, he sees a fast-moving figure who strikes him as being the "type and the genius of deep crime," the "worst heart of the world." He leaps up in pursuit, but the man is elusive in every sense: he never stops, never breaks away from the city's milling crowds. All he does is walk, day and night. The café detective eventually gives up his chase. "The essence of all crime is undivulged," Poe concludes.

Of the various evil geniuses, anarchist conspirators, and criminal overlords who populated the fiction of the later nineteenth century, one of the most Moriartyish appeared, unexpectedly, in Henry James's "The Princess Casamassima" (1886). This is considered James's "political" novel, but its politics are exceedingly vague. The hero, a low-born aesthete named Hyacinth, is drawn into a circle of radicals in London who are awaiting instructions from a mastermind named Diedrich Hoffendahl. James writes:

> Hyacinth's little job was a very small part of what Hoffendahl had come to England for; he had in his hand innumerable other threads. . . . He had exactly the same mastery of them that a great musician . . . had of the keyboard of the piano; he treated all things, all persons, institutions, ideas, as so many notes in his great symphonic revolt. The day would come when Hyacinth, far down in the treble, would feel himself touched by the little finger of the composer, would become audible (with a short, sharp crack) for a second.

Such hazy snapshots show the archcriminal growing steadily in the nineteenth-century imagination. He was, perhaps, an outgrowth of the gigantism of the bourgeois age; the underworld, too, needed its tycoons and statesmen. If there was a Pinkerton Agency, there would also have to be a Worth Organization. But both Poe and James treated the idea of a central criminal or terroristic agency with careful skepticism. Poe suggests that the Man of the Crowd is a purely imaginary creature, and he also plays a joke on the detective genre

Bernard Schoenbaum

"I'd love to chat longer, but I'm working the room."

BRIEFLY NOTED

Talking to the Dead, by Helen Dunmore (Little, Brown; $21.95). This novel combines the pleasures of English-cottage stories (berry-picking, lots of trundling to the sea) with the more haunted intimacies of the sisters genre. After a clumsy start, Dunmore's choreography of her heroines' pas de deux is deft: you sense both the sororal telepathy and the familiar wounds. The surprise is that, despite a foreboding atmosphere, the author captures so much wary sensuality, usually in the kitchen. ("I smear my two hands with butter and ease them under the salmon, then lift.")

Mister Sandman, by Barbara Gowdy (Steerforth; $24). Joan Canary, a fairy-child idiot savant, is at the center of this curlicued, spangling Canadian gothic. She speaks only in clickings and hummings, plays Bach in the manner of Glenn Gould, and composes on her tape recorder a symphony of spliced words. But whether Joan is really stranger than the other members of her eccentric, promiscuous family becomes increasingly open to question. The oddball whimsicality of Gowdy's novel is perfectly captured in the final scene, in which the entire Canary clan joins in a moonlight game of Monkey in the Middle.

A Commotion in the Blood, by Stephen S. Hall (Holt; $30). This history of immunology focusses on efforts to fight off cancer using T cells, antibodies, and mysterious substances like TNF (tumor necrosis factor), all of which can act in concert to kill malignant tissue. As Hall follows the advances of a fairly new and fast-developing field—the nineteen-seventies are the "medieval days"—the initial crudeness of the therapies gives way to more elegant methods and a finer understanding of the "exquisite specificity" of immune function. In the end, we are left slightly dizzy from the abbreviations, but impressed by the inexorable vector of progress.

The Perfect Storm, by Sebastian Junger (Norton; $23.95). With waves as high as a hundred feet and winds so strong that anemometers were torn from their moorings, the storm of the title struck unsuspecting mariners off the coast of Nova Scotia in October, 1991. Junger traces the last voyage of the Andrea Gail—a commercial swordfishing boat that was lost, with all six hands, in the storm—and his account is relentlessly suspenseful.

Nazimova, by Gavin Lambert (Knopf; $32.50). The life of Alla Nazimova (1879-1945) followed a common theatrical trajectory: her miserable childhood impelled her to escape into fantasy; her grinding apprenticeship led to unqualified stardom, accompanied by almost unbelievable marital, sexual, and financial chaos; and her last years compose a coda of supporting-actress roles (with domestic tranquillity provided by a younger woman lover). When Lambert, a suave, knowledgeable biographer, has sorted out all the confusions, another, less common theme emerges: Nazimova was a great actress who proved financially unprofitable only when producers cast her in schlock.

(Advt.)

The novel is an art form without limits. An imaginative writer of fiction can plausibly envision the future, illuminate the present, even recreate a past that never was.

Michael Swanwick has done it all. In his latest novel, ***JACK FAUST***, he puts a new spin on a classic story. However, this author's Dr. Faustus sells his soul for knowledge that was unknown—and, in fact, unimaginable—in Goethe's day: the secrets of microbiology and aerodynamics, the mysteries of the cosmos and the atom. Armed with these powerful tools, the protagonist sets out to industrialize Europe centuries before its rightful time. They say, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Swanwick suggests that a lot of it can be catastrophic.

First-time novelist **Jeffrey Ford** invents a world that could well have been the collaborative brainchild of Jules Verne and Franz Kafka. ***THE PHYSIOGNOMY*** offers a dystopian vision of a place and time when a person's life, worth, and future are determined by the shape of his body and the lumps on his skull. This is a dark tale of official arrogance, lies, and corruption, in which a government functionary who uses scalpels and calipers to unlock the human soul is forced to painfully reexamine his own.

The real world and the spirit world come together in ***THE SHAMAN'S BONES*** by **James D. Doss**, a novel that fuses atmospheric mystery with Native American mysticism in a contemporary Western setting. As he did in his two previous Shaman mysteries—both of which were selected by *Publishers Weekly* as among the Best Books of the Year—Doss transports us to a place where timeless cultures clash with the modern-day in strange, often lethal ways that rational science cannot fully explain.

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which he himself helped to invent: the fact that his narrator's "electrified," clue-reading state of mind arises in a coffee-house suggests that the whole episode may be the result of too much caffeine. James, for his part, conspicuously keeps his mysterious Hoffendahl offstage—never quite present as a flesh-and-blood character, always subject to others' perceptions and paraphrases. Hoffendahl, too, might be some kind of mirage, or, at least, something less than "the very genius of a new social order." He is a will-o'-the-wisp, leading Hyacinth to a bloody, solitary end.

Conan Doyle, an unashamed populist, is not the kind of author one expects to play such games of illusion, but a close reading of "The Final Problem" reveals interesting lacunae in the construction of the Moriarty character. He remains a cipher throughout; he is an indistinct ghost next to Holmes, that unforgettable decadent who lounges in a dressing gown, injects cocaine, engages in late-night indoor revolver practice, and rhapsodizes dissonantly on the violin. Moriarty is the agent of Holmes's death and is also his mirror image—his "intellectual equal," as Holmes himself admits. You almost suspect that the great detective has dreamed up a great criminal out of boredom. Watson, the trusty narrator, gets only two ambiguous glimpses of Moriarty in the course of a pursuit from London to Switzerland. At a railway station, he sees "a tall man pushing his way furiously through the crowd," and in the Swiss Alps he sees "a man . . . walking very rapidly." Those images echo Poe's "Man of the Crowd." All we really see is a phantom in perpetual motion.

WRITERS of fiction, Conan Doyle not least, capitalize impressively on the irony that attends a detective's search for the perfect enemy. A later episode in the life of Adam Worth tells a similar story, one that implicates William Pinkerton, the elder son of the founder of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. The idea of a detective agency was almost unheard of when Allan Pinkerton began his famous business, in 1850; the one prior model was the Sûreté, founded in France by the reformed thief Vidocq. (Vidocq later fell under a cloud when he was suspected of staging robberies for himself to solve.) The Pinkertons—whose insignia of an all-seeing eye led to the coining of the term "private eye," and whose Rogues' Gallery was the forerunner of the F.B.I.'s Most Wanted list—were seldom accused of corruption, but they were still viewed with intense suspicion. They were considered in some corners an unregulated private army for hire by the rich.

William Pinkerton, too, had a Final Problem, a strange endgame with his opponent. When he heard that Worth had been captured in Belgium, he did something very curious. Rather than send along to the Belgian police his accumulated files, which might have kept Worth in prison for life, he remained silent. Once Worth got out of prison, he was desperate for cash and approached Pinkerton in Chicago about arranging a deal for the return of Gainsborough's "Duchess of Devonshire." Pinkerton not only went along with the scheme but also essentially laundered money so that Worth could be paid for the painting he had stolen. During Worth's declining years, the two men corresponded regularly. "Pinkerton sent his friend poems cut from the local paper, snippets of underworld news, and the latest racing results," Ben Macintyre writes. Just before Worth died, at the age of fifty-six, Pinkerton was promising to help him develop an idea for a burglar alarm.

In a chapter entitled "Moriarty Confesses to Holmes," Macintyre wrings romance from the friendship between the aging Pinkerton and the fallen Worth. But the episode also points to a pathetic crisis in Pinkerton's mind, of which Worth took material advantage. The detective, at this stage in his career, was known less as a wrangler of outlaws than as a brutal strikebreaker: the suppression of the Homestead strike of 1892 was his handiwork. Now he set about rescuing and immortalizing a worthier, more mythic foe, his own private Moriarty. He even stage-managed the climax of Worth's story—the return of the Duchess to its rightful owner. The main source of information on Worth, it turns out, is a pamphlet published by the Pinkerton Agency, together with notes from a long interview that Pinkerton himself conducted. How many of these testimonials to his subject's genius—"the most inventive and daring criminal of modern times"—should we believe? Worth, too, may have been a fast-walking Man of the Crowd, a fantasy of the detective mind. ♦

SHOWCASE BY RICHARD AVEDON

BIG NOCHE

SOLEDAD BARRIO'S specialty is the *soleá*, the dance of loneliness. Elena Andujar moves more naturally in an *alegría*, or song of joy. When they perform together, as they are doing through August 17th in "Noche Flamenca," at Theatre 80 St. Marks, the result is subtle, like a Gypsy "Sense and Sensibility," with the full palette of sisterly familiarities.

They are not the troupe's only odd couple. Rafael (Falo) Jimenez Jimenez Jimenez (his mother was a Jimenez, his father a Jimenez Jimenez—Gypsies are a tight-knit lot) sings quietly, with the coaxing ululations that have made his début album, "¡Cante Gitano!," a huge success in Spain. The thirty-three-year-old practices at all hours, even outside the theatre just before the performance. His partner in song, the forty-four-year-old Antonio Vizárraga, doesn't study, doesn't warm up, and has been known to wake up fifteen minutes before curtain, smoke a cigarette, and start the show. Unlike his counterpart, Vizárraga has a delivery as hearty as a train conductor's, which he softens with an occasional cynical aside. "We are different in certain details," Jimenez Jimenez suggests. "But we both like to be good."

The company has been doing exactly that—differing and being good—at Theatre 80 for the past four summers. It has achieved this durability by relying on the largely unscripted festiveness of an extended family. Jimenez Jimenez has grown from a shy youth to a gentle man. Vizárraga continues to shout unexpected encouragement. Barrio dances with a self-contained sadness that doesn't yield its secret even on a third or fourth visit. No two shows are the same.

This familial congeniality is not a gimmick. At the curtain call, a two-year-old in a red dress and gold earrings often runs onstage. Barrio, who performed up to her seventh month of pregnancy, smiles and takes her child by the hand. They bow together.

—KEVIN CONLEY

Elena Andujar and Soledad Barrio, New York City, July 15, 1997.

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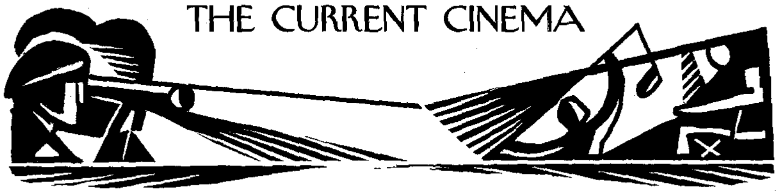
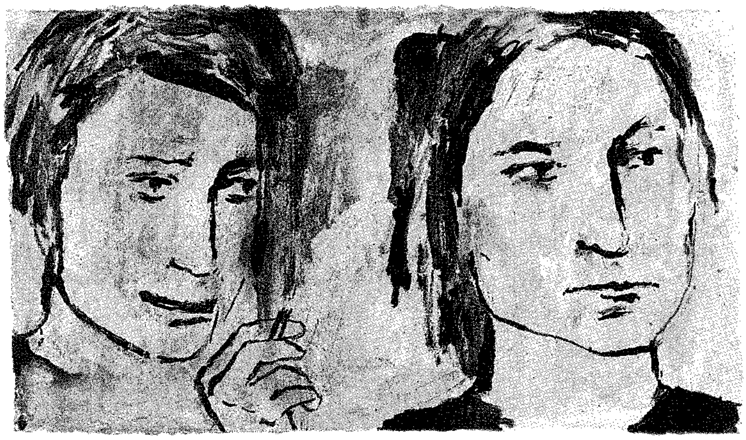


MARKING TIME

Youthful passion and adult disappointment.

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

MIKE LEIGH'S new picture, "Career Girls," about a pair of former college roommates seeing each other for the first time in six years, is appealingly modest. At the beginning of the film, Annie (Lynda Steadman), a quiet young woman who lives with her mother in the North of England, arrives in London for a weekend with her old friend Hannah (Katrin Cartlidge), who lives alone in a sparse, impersonal, slightly too small flat. At the end, less than an hour and a half later, Annie heads home, on schedule and, like Hannah, not obviously changed; mostly, the women have reminisced—with frequent flashbacks—and in the process have reinforced an emotional bond that time and distance had weakened a bit. Nothing momentous, really: Leigh appears content simply to alternate the heroines' shared past with their briefly shared present, and to elicit from the contrast a few casual observations about grownups' ambivalent attitudes toward their unstable, unformed youthful selves. In a way, "Career Girls" feels like something of a sentimental journey for Leigh, too—a return, after the gruelling philosophizing of "Naked" (1993) and the family-epic sprawl of last year's "Secrets & Lies," to the no-big-deal spirit of the mostly comic films he made for British television in the seventies and the early eighties. (Several of these, happily, are now available on videocassette in this country.) And, like his characters here, he revisits his past a little hesitantly, as if the gap between his past concerns and his present ones were a problem he couldn't quite resolve.



Two English girls: Lynda Steadman and Katrin Cartlidge in "Career Girls."

What's unusual about "Career Girls" is that by using a flashback structure Leigh explicitly dramatizes the characters' histories—the back-stories that he usually counts on his actors to imply. In this picture he is exposing a crucial element of acting technique and, in a sense, of his own filmmaking method as well. His movies are always developed out of long, intense workshop sessions, in which the performers improvise within the sketchy outlines of character and situation provided by the director; before shooting, he selects from what the actors have given him, arranges their spontaneous inventions into (more or less) shapely scenes, and constructs a finished script. Actors often try to work their way into characters by imagining details of their lives which are, strictly speaking, outside the dramatic frame:

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what they eat, what they read, what they were like when they were younger. Leigh's movies, which grow out of such exercises, show the benefits of the actors' thoroughness: the people on the screen don't have to waste time explaining themselves, because everything they do suggests the totality of their experience—you feel that you've known them all your life. That's why the best Leigh films, like "Meantime" (1983) and "Life Is Sweet" (1991), seem so fresh and immediate; in them, the past is simply part of the present, and therefore doesn't have to be dwelled on or, as in a conventional drama, withheld for a "powerful" climactic revelation.

Until recently, Leigh has defined character in terms of action rather than introspection; that is, he has always been more interested in what people are going to *do* than in how they became who they are. But in "Secrets & Lies" he atypically saved one big secret for the last act, resorting—at the end of an otherwise terrific film—to the sort of dramatic contrivance we thought we'd never see in one of his pictures. And in "Career Girls" Hannah and, especially, Annie keep drifting into recollection, into memories that don't so much explain the women's present circumstances as replace them with something more vivid. The effect of the back-and-forth movement is, at least initially, comic. The movie gets laughs from the contrast between the cluttered squalor of the girls' student digs (directly above a Chinese takeout joint) and the sleek orderliness of Hannah's current flat; and, in the larger sense, between the dire eventfulness of their college days and the dull sobriety of their present lives. Although you're grateful that Leigh doesn't use the flashback conceit to construct a vulgar cause-and-effect model of personality, you may still feel that this departure from his customary approach to character and narrative doesn't quite pay off. Hannah and Annie are less interesting than Leigh's usual people, who are so busy being where they are that they just can't bother worrying about where they've been.

IT'S hard not to suspect that in this case Leigh's risky, experimental process failed to produce the results he was hoping for—that he went to work with an idea that was too thin for a feature film and with performers who lacked the versatility to flesh it out. To put it bluntly, if more were going on in the present-tense relationship between the women, the memory scenes wouldn't be necessary. But Annie and Hannah's grownup lives are so empty and unstimulating that all these women can do, it seems, is spin their wheels, circling back to the past while they wait for something important to happen to them; it's clear that their reunion, although it's pleasant and, in its way, emotionally satisfying, is not that event. In the present action of "Career Girls," Leigh captures the halting rhythms of reacquaintance: the erratic progress from awkwardness—the mild disorientation each woman experiences as she attempts to adjust to how the other has changed—to relaxation and, finally, to a renewal of the old intimacy. The over-all tone of these scenes, though, is merely wistful. (The exception is a riotously funny low-comic sequence in which the women, idly shopping for new quarters for Hannah, have to fend off the desperate advances of one flat's occupant—a swinging divorcé, played with alarming exuberance by Andy Serkis.) The flashbacks are here just to show us what Annie and Hannah are nostalgic for: a time when nothing seemed to have much consequence, when they didn't actually *expect* anything out of life.

That's not a lot to hang a movie on, and "Career Girls," probably inadvertently, induces in the viewer a form of the restless feeling that afflicts the grownup heroines: the sense of a story that stubbornly refuses to begin. And while the picture dawdles and marks time—often amiably—we start to reflect, as the women do, on what might have gone wrong. Part of the problem, I think, is that both Cartlidge (who appeared in a supporting role in "Naked") and Steadman (who's a newcomer to movies) have constricted, one-dimensional acting styles: each is better equipped to represent the extremes of character—the stark dialectic of youthful passion and adult disappointment—than to explore the wide range of ambiguous emotions in which Leigh's characters generally operate. Steadman plays the younger Annie as a caricature of adolescent neurosis: this girl is so shy (partly as a result of a bad case of dermatitis on her face) that she keeps her head down constantly, never daring to look anyone in the eye. Cartlidge—a Sandra Bernhard type—is, in the student scenes, considerably more animated: every inch of her long, skinny frame seems to be in perpetual nervous motion, and as she twitches she sprays wisecracks and insults at any available target. The performance is hyperactive and not especially convincing; it improves a little when Cartlidge settles down to play the older Hannah, but neither she nor her co-star really does much more in the present-tense scenes than play the same notes in a lower register.

The saving grace of "Career Girls" is that, until a late sequence in which the women bump into a college friend whose life has turned out much worse than theirs, Leigh doesn't ask us to be bowled over by the findings of his most recent experiment. If you go into this picture with the scaled-down expectations of a grownup—or, better yet, the rock-bottom pessimism of a veteran moviegoer—you may find enough small truths and enough offhand comic business to keep you reasonably happy for an hour and a half, and even, perhaps, to help you muddle through your dreary adult existence a while longer. And there's a kind of integrity, I suppose, in Leigh's irresolution at the end of the short, circular journey the movie makes. For both the director and his characters, "Career Girls" could serve as a lesson in the perils of self-consciousness. What it says—whether it means to or not—is "Don't look back." ♦

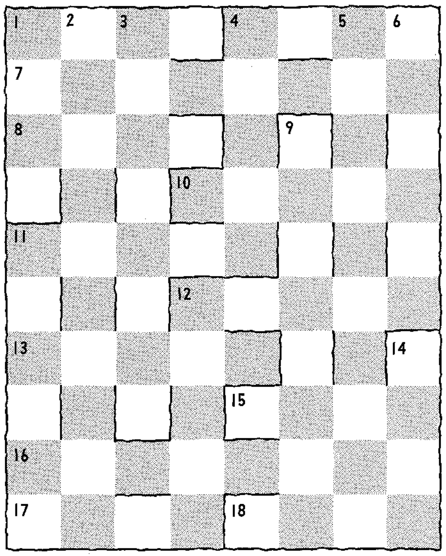
8:28 PM—Gary Hootman reported a horse running loose in the area of Church and Pleasant streets. A resident advised the horse was brought into town by an Amish man, Ervin M. Coblentz, and the horse had cramps. A veterinarian was called and gave the horse a shot which made it unable to trot back home. Coblentz had tied the horse up near Crazy Ray's tattoo parlor, 600 Cottage St., and left it for the night, except it got loose. Coblentz later called the police department and said it would take him an hour and a half to get into town to get his horse. No other details were available.

—*Ashland (Ohio) Times Gazette.*

We're not sure we *need* any other details.

8 X 10 CRYPTIC

NO. 10 BY FRASER SIMPSON



ACROSS

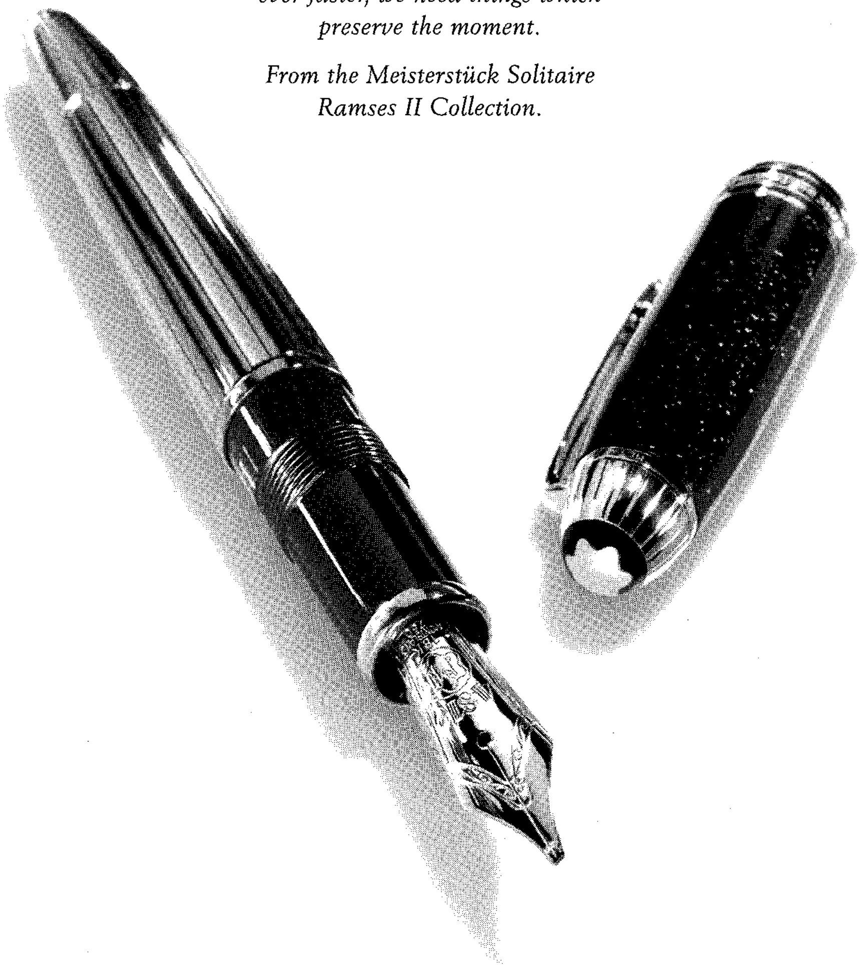
- **1** European soldier's head is found next to bed (4)
- **4** Hear story end (4)
- **7** Name-drop in a sneaky way—sorry (6,2)
- **8** Clip end off Hibernian flower (4)
- **10** Curious temperature repulsed ear-biter (5)
- **11** In part, ruling out jargon (5)
- **12** "Home Improvement" star dropped behind the leader (5)
- **13** With assistance, have a dog? (5)
- **15** Move prison (4)
- **16** Once again, pick up back rest (8)
- **17** Cut list crookedly (4)
- **18** Pale and, at first, bashful (4)

DOWN

- **1** Barbecue rod points upward (4)
- **2** Her acclaim confused Hoagie (10)
- **3** Gave directions to one tired stranger (8)
- **4** Also taking in Kentucky city (5)
- **5** Mischievous bears on top of drain (10)
- **6** Pressure Oilers' center soon (4,2)
- **9** Singles out one distress call coming about after midnight (8)
- **11** Threatens decreases (6)
- **12** Dealer truly keeps listening (5)
- **14** Fancy celebration started late (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 9 appears on page 82. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.



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SHOUTS & MURMURS

KHMER ROUÉ

BY STEPHEN SHERRILL AND PAUL TOUGH

POL POT has a problem. It is 11 A.M. on a warm, lazy California morning and he's having breakfast poolside at the Beverly Hills Hotel. The problem is that he ordered the flapjacks, and the waitress has just brought him the Belgian waffles. He looks down at the plate. His shoulders tighten. The waitress stutters an apology.

But then something unexpected happens: Pol Pot relaxes. He takes a breath. "It's O.K.," he tells the waitress. "I'll eat the waffles." As she walks away, the former leader of Cambodia chuckles. "There was a time," he admits, looking around for the syrup, "when I would have sent the waffles back. But things are different now."

Different, indeed. When Pol Pot ruled Cambodia, his staff knew better than to disappoint him. But in 1979, after four years of primitivist agrarian reform, he was driven from power and spent the next two decades waging a guerrilla war in the jungle of northern Cambodia, a period in his life that he now describes as "difficult." Earlier this year, word around the jungle was that Pol Pot was burned out, bitter. For too long, he'd stayed out of view, and, fame being the fickle mistress she is, his name had dropped off the front pages. But now, suddenly, Pol Pot is back.

He is about to cut into his waffles when another waitress appears—this time with the plate of missing flapjacks. A stern look comes over Pol Pot's face.

"I guess the staff here needs a little reëducation."

Silence.

"Just kidding."

We all laugh.

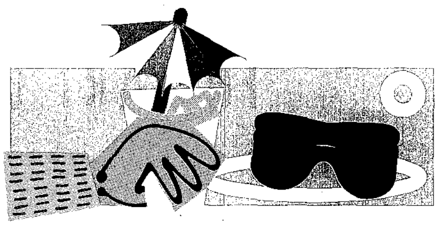
POL POT was born in 1928, in a little town he calls "Nowheresville, Cambodia." It's a long way from the Santa Monica Freeway, where right now we're driving to the gym in his Subaru Outback. The air-conditioning, which is on full blast, has mussed his hair, and he's checking himself out in the rearview mirror. Despite his sixty-nine years, his round, clean-shaven face is tanned and smooth. He's wearing a plain white T and a pair of faded—but not too faded—combat pants. A beige linen jacket is draped over the back seat. He smells good. Satisfied, he pushes the mirror back into place.

Though Pol Pot has always kept quiet on the subject of his early life, driving seems to have put him in the mood to talk: "After college, my parents wanted me to get a steady job, but I just kicked around—odd jobs, hitchhiking, this and that. But I always had the revolution bug, and I finally realized that the only thing I was really good at was forced collectivization. The rest is, you know, history."

So how did his parents feel when he finally made it?

"They were my biggest fans," he says. "But, no matter how big I got, they never let me forget where I came from. In Phnom Penh, I might be Supreme Revolutionary Commander, but when I came home it was always just Pol."

A passenger in the next car recognizes him and waves excitedly. Pol Pot seems flustered and speeds up. "It's weird, you know? Six months ago, I could go anywhere and no one cared," he says. "Now everybody wants a piece of me. I mean, I'm glad the phone's ringing again, but I'm not really sure I trust it."



As we near Brentwood, a hand-painted sign on an overpass catches his eye. It reads "O.J.'s House," with an arrow pointing to the right. Pol Pot shakes his head. "Murderer," he says.

AT the Odyssey Gym, in Santa Monica, Pol Pot is known as Mr. Pot, as in "Hi, I'm Scott, Mr. Pot's personal trainer." Since turning single again a few years ago, he's become a self-described "health nut." "Don't get me wrong," he says, climbing off a Lifecycle. "I'm still a big fan of radical primitivist agrarian reform. But one morning I woke up and it hit me: I'd been so busy thinking about the masses that I hadn't been taking very good care of Pol Pot."

At the moment, Scott seems to be doing a fairly good job of looking after the aging socialist leader. "Let's do ten minutes on the treadmill, Mr. Pot," he says, "and remember to breathe." Scott hands him a bottle of water, and Pol Pot muses aloud: "Anlong Veng, my remote jungle hideout, used to be a real people place. Now it's all about who's up, who's down—not who's doing the best job of seizing control of the means of production. I just don't think I want to play that game anymore. I'm playing a different game now—the game of life."

A few minutes later, Scott reappears, to turn down the treadmill. "Warm down—*very* important," Pol Pot says, running a towel over his hair. The sunlight is shining through the front window, warming Pol Pot's face, which breaks into a bright, satisfied smile. The most sought-after man in Southeast Asia looks out at the world. The treadmill slows to a stop. Pol Pot has finally stopped running. Pol Pot is happy at last. ♦

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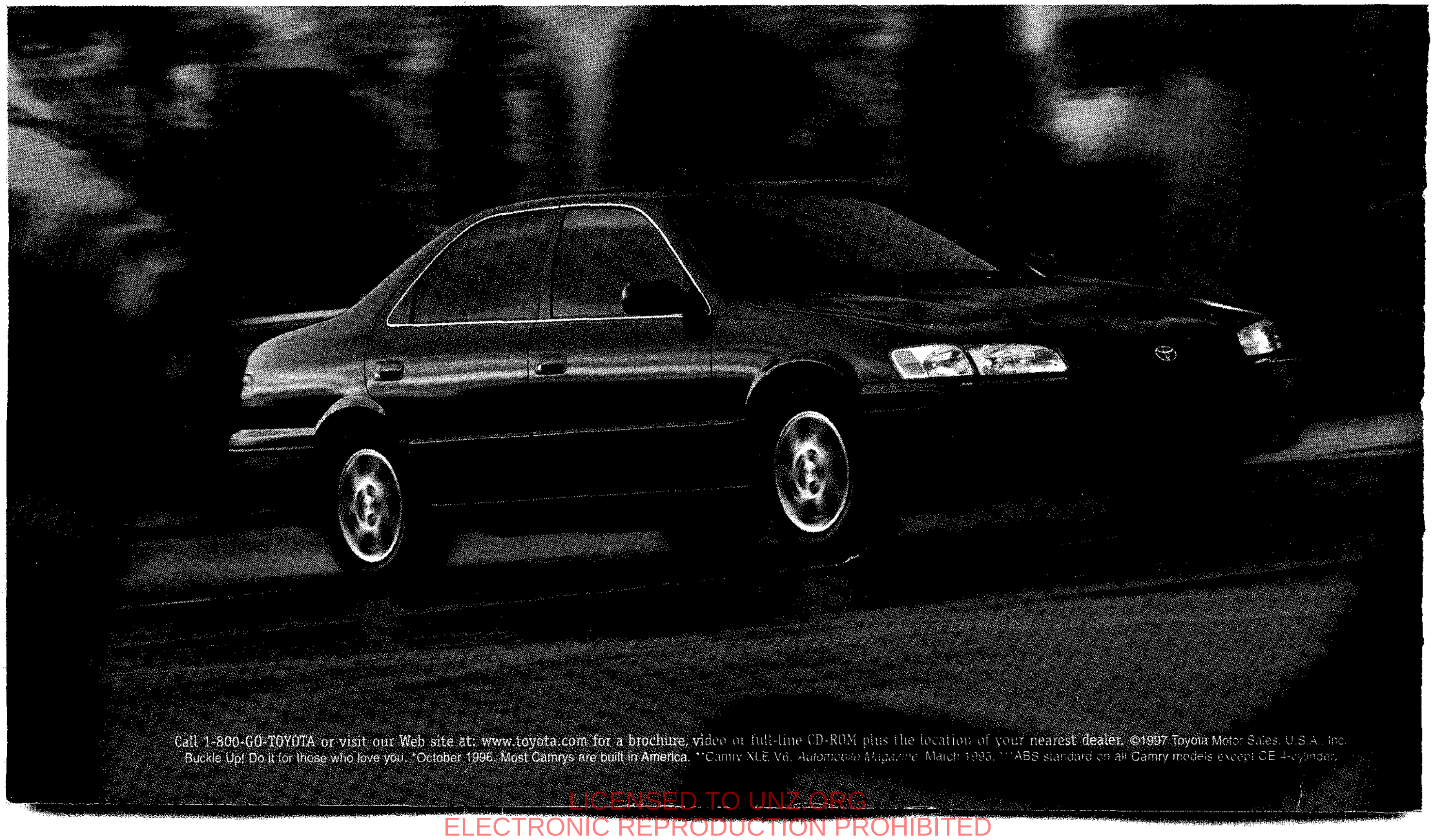

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